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THE TRIANGLE.

A

SERIES OF NUMBERS

UPON

THREE THEOLOGICAL POINTS,

ENFORCED

FROM VARIOUS PULPITS

IN THE

CITY OF NEW-YORK.

BY INVESTIGATOR.

New-York:
JOHN WILEY, 22 NASSAU-STREET.
1832.

P.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1831, by ANN WHELPLEY, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New-York, in the Second Circuit.

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DEDICATION.

To the People of New-York.

THE first of the following numbers was published in the New-York Courier. A note in that paper, the following day, stated, that the editor of the paper declined publishing the remainder of the work, because it was likely to give offence. I preferred a public paper to a pamphlet form, for two reasons: one was, that a newspaper is read by many persons who seldom have leisure, or inclination, to labour through the Essays on didactic theology, found in Magazines, Sermons, and Systematic Discourses. The other was, that I entered on the publication not as a theologian or controversialist, but as a spectator and reporter of facts.

To be candid, the work was principally designed for the edification of those who would be willing to be styled high-toned Calvinists. And it may seem, perhaps, to some a little paradoxical, that the very first number should kindle such a flame of resentment, as to cause alarm to the editor, of whose correct taste and liberal sentiments I have no

doubt, when it is a fact, that the number does no more than condemn a sentiment which Calvin condemns, or, at any rate, does not justify—I mean *the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity*, independently of their own conduct and character. Neither Calvin, Luther, nor Melancthon, believed in that doctrine.

People of New-York, I desire you to take notice, that these high-toned Calvinists were so enraged at Calvin's own sentiments, that the editor of the Courier was induced not to proceed. For your satisfaction I give you the words of Calvin. He sums up his opinion of original sin in few words: "Vedetur, ergo, peccatum originale hæreditare naturæ nostræ pravitas et corruptio, in omnes animæ partes diffusa." *Wherefore, original sin seems to be the hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature diffused into all parts of the soul.* "Neque," subjoins Calvin, "ista est alieni delicti obligatio. Non ita est accipiendum, ac si, insontes ipsi et immerentes, culpam delicti ejus sustineremus." *Neither is that an obligation or accountableness for another's fault. It is not to be understood as though we, ourselves innocent, should sustain the blame of his (Adam's) transgression.*

I am aware that most people have not leisure to examine authors. Those, however, that will take that trouble, will perceive that the views of Original Sin, Depravity, and Atonement, advocated in these numbers, are not peculiar to New England, but, on the contrary, have been known and maintained in the church, by many of the ablest divines, since the Reformation, and by a majority in the American churches.

But, fellow citizens, it is not so much with their senti-

ments that I am disposed to contend, although they are sufficiently incorrect and erroneous; it is with their horribly intolerant, bigoted, and persecuting spirit; against which every man should lift his voice, and proclaim his indignation. The holy fathers and friars of the inquisitorial commission were never more vindictive or implacable. It comes in thunders and anathemas from their desks: in cants, whispers, and inuendoes among the throng: it comes larded with much *holy grimace*, and many sanctimonious sighs, for the credulous and pious; with much logical jargon and biblical criticism for smatterers; with spleen and gall enough, when the company has sufficient pride and malice to bear it; and with firebands for all the young foxes they can catch. When they have exhausted their topics of argument, and that they can soon do, without a miracle, they resort to sarcasm and ridicule, and here their talents are wonderful: Hercules often comes in "head and shoulders."

These gentlemen surely forget the age and country in which they live, by three hundred years. They ought to feel comfortable whilst others think for themselves. And one object of these numbers is to remind them, that they live in the year 1816. A man in this city does not expect to share the fate of Servetus, though he should differ from Calvin. I will not say what a man ought to expect when he is so fortunate as not to differ with Calvin.

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THE TRIANGLE.

No. I.

It is an old, and perhaps will be regarded as a trite saying, that the decline of morality, in a nation, precedes and ensures the decline of its prosperity. The tendency of the increase of wealth, numbers, and refinement, to a deterioration of morals, is exemplified in the history of the greatest nations, and is too obvious to require proof, and too well known to need illustration. Happy would it be for mankind, if the natural tendency of nations and societies to sink into luxury, extravagance, dishonesty, and all the extremes of immorality, were not, in many instances, aided by the very means and institutions which are professedly established for the opposite purpose.

Even religion, descended from Heaven, arrayed in the beauties of virtue, and her head encompassed with the rays of divinity, has been counterfeited, her institutions perverted, her doctrines corrupted, her glories sullied: so that, instead of presenting any barrier to vice, or any check to immorality, she has often become their most efficient auxiliary. It has been the boast, perhaps the felicity of this city, that it abounds more than any other city with institutions designed to favour morality; and while I leave it for the reader to judge for himself, of the effect and success of these institutions, I am concerned to say that, in my opinion, some of the most showy and prepossessing, at any rate, the most noisy means used to promote morality and religion in this city, are amongst the most useless, false, and hollow. I refer to nothing less than the strain of preaching continually and incessantly used in many of the pulpits of this city!

I have no controversy with any one, nor do I enter on this subject in any other than a political point of view. I consider

morality as the highest ornament and strongest bulwark of society; whatever, therefore, diminishes the motives and weakens the obligations to morality, comes no less under the animadversion of the politician than that of the divine; as it surely no less impairs the temporal than the spiritual interests of the community. There are a few points which go perpetually into the strain of preaching of certain gentlemen; and their scheme may be compared to a Triangle, from which they never depart, and in which, if they step out of one angle, their next step is into *another;* the succeeding one, into the one from whence they started.

The want of variety might be compensated by force and expansion of talents, were their angular scheme laid, both as to its sides and angles, in the great field of truth.

Their scheme commences by teaching that *the whole human race are guilty of the sin of Adam, independently of their own conduct, and for that sin are truly deserving of eternal punishment.* We are apt to take our opinions on the credit of venerable names; and very many names deemed venerable, if weighed in the balance of unerring truth, would be found to have derived their importance from a long and industrious propagation of error. Probably no individual man yet had time, candour, patience, and resolution, to examine and substantiate, on proper evidence, the whole mass of his opinions. Few men proceed to any considerable length in this arduous work. They take their opinions, nay, their articles of faith, as they do the fashion of their garments, not upon a careful inquiry, whether they are the best, but upon the testimony of the tailor who makes them, that they are in the fashion,

The doctrine of *original sin*, as just stated, is thus received by its advocates. It has descended from the lumber and trash of the dark times of ignorance and supertsition, mysticism, and bigotry. The great reformers did nobly, but they did not do every thing. They merit the approbation of men, and met with divine acceptance for what they did, and are certainly to be excused for what they omitted, in their great work. I speak as though the reformers held the doctrine of original sin according to the tenor of the preceding statement. Some of them did, others did not; and the truth is, that a candid examination of the

sentiments of the fathers—of the most learned and judicious divines in Europe, before the reformation, and since, will show, beyond all dispute, that the above statement of the doctrine of original sin has never been the general or prevailing opinion of the Christian church.

Yet you shall hear it inculcated from Sabbath to Sabbath in many of our churches, and swallowed down, as a sweet morsel, by many a gaping mouth, that a man ought to feel himself actually guilty of a sin committed six thousands years before he was born; nay, that, prior to all consideration of his own moral conduct, *he ought to feel himself deserving of eternal damnation for the first sin of Adam.* I hesitate not to say, that no scheme of religion ever propagated amongst men contains a more monstrous, a more horrible tenet. The atrocity of this doctrine is beyond comparison. The visions of the Koran, the fictions of the Sadder, the fables of the Zendavesta, all give place to this:—Rabbinical legends, Brahminical vagaries all vanish before it.

The idea, that all the numerous millions of Adam's posterity deserve the ineffable and endless torments of hell, for a single act of his, before any one of them existed, is repugnant to that reason which God has given us, is subversive of all possible conceptions of justice. No such doctrine is taught in the scriptures, or can impose itself on any rational mind, which is not trammeled by education, dazzled by interest, warped by prejudice, and bewildered by theory.—This is one corner of the triangle above mentioned.

This doctrine perpetually urged, and the subsequent strain of teaching usually attached to it, will not fail to drive the incautious mind to secret and practical, or open infidelity. An attempt to force such monstrous absurdities on the human understanding, will be followed by the worst effects. A man who finds himself condemned for that of which he is not guilty, will feel little regret for his real transgressions.

I shall not apply these remarks to the purpose I had in view, till I have considered some other points of a similar character;—or, if I may resort to the metaphor alluded to, till I have pointed out the other two angles of the triangle.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. II.

WHETHER it may be termed a disposition, or passion, or called by any other name, there is something in some men which may be denominated an *humble pride*. I fear, could it be analyzed, it would not be found to want any of the most virulent qualities of the true and old-fashioned pride, known in the world ever since the fall of man, and which, indeed, threw a morning star from heaven, before it inflamed man to rebellion. It seems to be the pride of the gentlemen alluded to in the preceding number, to plunge down human nature as low as possible. They are by no means satisfied with laying the whole human race under the ban of eternal damnation, for an act which was committed before any of them existed;—they go much farther. And this brings me to the second *angle* of the true diagram of their scheme.

They teach, and strenulously insist, that *all men labor under a true and physical incapacity to do any thing which God requires.* To this total and universal inability they deny all figurative or metaphysical import, and contend that men are as truly, and in the same sense, unable to obey the law of God as they are to overturn the Andes, or drain the ocean. What do we hear next? They turn immediately round, and exhort their hearers, with great pathos, to do every thing which God requires, and denounce their disobedience as meriting eternal damnation. Nay, this inability and thraldom, in its whole extent, they carry back to the original fountain of their guilt and condemnation, and say that it was all done in Adam;—that all the human race were made guilty, and were wholly incapacitated to do any good act, in their first father. Nevertheless, they go on with mighty eloquence to exhort them to do every duty.

Had I not already said that their notion of original sin contained the most monstrous error ever advanced in any scheme of religion, I should be tempted to say the same of this. But I will venture to say I think them both infinitely distant from the truth. But, says the advocate of these truly tremendous and detestable tenets, "This is Calvinism; and dare you dispute CAL-

VIN ?" To which I reply, If Calvin believed in these doctrines, which we deny, he must have derived his light therein, for aught I know, from the flames of SERVETUS ; indeed, they more resemble the light of infernal than celestial fire.

This doctrine of man's inability is an insult to every man's unbiassed understanding—to the light of his conscience. It is contrary to the whole current of the sacred scriptures : and, indeed, its warmest advocates are tempted to contradict themselves every moment ; and when they preach best, this temptation is effectual ; or, to say the least, their contradictions are seldom farther apart than the improvement from the sermon. Their preaching often reminds me of the mode of writing used by some ancient nations, which was from left to right, and from right to left, alternately crossing the page in opposite directions.

These gentlemen, however, might be laid off into different sections. Some of them, aware of the inconsistency, frankly own that wicked men are under no obligation to love or obey God : and thus, for the sake of theory and system, plunge still deeper in error. Others boldly deny all moral agency to mankind ;—others again contend that men are moral agents to do wrong, but not to do right ; evincing still more ignorance of the philosophy of the human mind than of the word of God.

Is it wonderful that there should be so many Gallios in this city ? That so many should with scornful smile turn from this monstrous jargon, and cry out, "Wretched mysticism !—riddles !—contradictions !—What, was I rendered, by Adam's first act of sin, a criminal deserving endless torments ? Was I, at the same time, totally incapacitated to yield obedience to the Almighty ruler ? Was I bound hand and foot six thousand years ago, and rocks of adamant laid on the seal of my eternal perdition ? Impossible ! The glorious volume of nature itself contradicts all this, and shows me a far different character of my Creator and Preserver."

INVESTIGATOR.

No. III.

We come to the third and last great point of their system of theology, which makes out the triangle, from which, as I said, they do not depart. They tell you there is a remedy for a part of mankind; *Christ has died for an elect number.* They, and they only, enjoy an offer of salvation; and for them alone is provision made. On the contrary, they plumply deny that "*Christ has tasted death for every man;*" they will by no means allow that "*He is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world;*" they abhor the idea of going "*into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature.*" They would tell you, that if they could distinguish who the elect are, in their assemblies, they should preach the gospel only to them; they should tell them that Christ died only for them: but, as for the rest, they should preach nothing but the certainty of eternal damnation.

Nor does this, though it gives the lines of the triangle, display the worst features of their scheme. They go on to state, that even the elect are not bound to believe in the Saviour, or to love and obey him, till he has convinced them, in a supernatural way, that he died for them. Thus, to the grossest error in doctrine adding the basest selfishness in heart and practice. Nothing offends them so deeply as the assertion, that the perfection and glory of the Saviour are the highest motives of love and obedience to him. Yet, as for the non-elect, they assure them, that their condemnation will be vastly aggravated for rejecting salvation by Christ.

The whole of their doctrine, then, amounts to this, that a man is, in the first place, condemned, incapacitated, and eternally reprobated for the sin of Adam: in the next place, that he is condemned over again, for not doing that which he is totally, in all respects, unable to do; and, in the third place, that he is condemned, and doubly and trebly condemned, for not believing in a Saviour, who never died for him, and with whom he has no more to do than a fallen angel.

This is what I call *strong* meat, and the stomach which can digest such food, can, I should think, digest iron and adamant. The natural and necessary deductions from these leading tenets, their various ramifications and subordinate collateral branches, exert a deep influence, and diffuse an alarming complexion over the whole plan of revelation. These teachers have turned their faces towards the ages of darkness, and are travelling back with rapid strides to the jargon of schoolmen, and the reveries and superstitions of Monks. Were a painter to draw an emblem of their plan, you would see the distorted phiz, squinting eye, and haggard features of perfect selfishness, mounted on the huge, inflated, and putrescent carcass of Antinomianism.

Whether they admit or deny the doctrine of moral agency their crude notions of that, and other things correlative, amount to an absolute and universal virtual denial of it: of course, their scheme embraces the strongest and most odious features of fatalism, or, rather that men are mere machines, dead as inorganic matter. They have no notion of moral virtue as an exercise of the human mind; they even wish that phrase expunged from our language. Of course, their sermons generally lie within the narrow limits already marked out; which they are pleased to style, *preaching Christ.*

To this it is proper to add, that they are tenacious of their own opinions, and intolerant of those of others in no ordinary degree. I shall justify this remark, by simply adverting to the recent expulsion of a young man, of unblemished character and respectable talents, from a theological seminary in this city. I cannot but notice, as an extraordinary coincidence, that the very man who expelled him has, at this time, come out and astonished the world by a pompous and flaming production in favour of *general communion*, catholicism, and Christian charity. I wish he would inform the world whether he intends they shall follow his *book*, or his *example*. I cannot express what gratitude I feel to Providence, that though Bonner and Gardiner should revive, they would not find, in this country, a goverment ready to second their intolerance by the flames of persecution. The tiger may show his teeth and growl, but he cannot bite.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. IV.

With no design to exaggerate or colour too highly, I have, in the preceding numbers, given a sketch of the incessant strain of preaching pursued in many congregations of this city. I have not misrepresented, neither have I withheld the truth. As I said, I have no controversy with any man: and am willing to give full credit to the learning and talents of many who teach these doctrines. Indeed, I have a charitable hope that some of them imagine they are labouring in the cause of truth. But truth will one day instruct them that, as "they have sown the wind they shall reap the whirlwind."

I will not undertake to say that all the vices of the city are chargeable to the account of their errors; far from it; but I will undertake to say that their doctrines are calculated, and tend, to drive men to skepticism, deism, atheism, libertinism; nay, to madness. The rash and unwary man that enters their assembly is amazed to hear his assent challenged to propositions from which his understanding revolts with horror: assertions are arrogantly, as it were, crammed down his throat, which insult his reason. He is told he can do nothing, yet threatened with endless perdition for his neglect. He is condemned for a sin he never committed; commanded to do what he is told he cannot do; and exhorted to believe in a Saviour who never died for him.

The muddiness, the confusion, the arrogance with which these sentiments are hurled forth in a storm of popular eloquence, or shall I say vociferation, precludes all possibility of conviction. One man sits and hears it with that kind of stupid amazement with which we hear a hail storm rattling upon the roof, and thunder rolling over our heads, till he is stunned into a kind of thoughtless reverie, and gathers as much from it as Cushi did from the defeat of Absalom: "I saw a great tumult, my lord, O king, but knew not what it was." Another hears it with contempt and secret indignation, and as he retires, musing says to himself, "are these the boasted principles and doctrines of religion, said to be so luminous, so simple, so rational, so intelligible so convincing?" But these teachers will tell him, for his consola-

tion, "No wonder you don't understand these truths, for they are evangelical truths, and you are a *natural man;* therefore you cannot understand them." Wretched subterfuge! As wise and as profound as if a man should say to me that "two and two are fifteen, and it is only because you want mathematical skill that you can't perceive it." Alas! what huge masses of flummery, falsehood, false doctrine; what immense cargoes of wood, hay, and stubble, the lumber and trash of speculation and fanaticism, are vended as evangelical truth, which *the natural man* cannot understand!

These teachers are often heard to bewail the departure of Boston from the faith; and I will not deny that there is much, very much, in Boston, to be lamented, on the ground of the decay of morals and sound principles; but this I say and predict, as the fate of *this city*, should the masses of people increase, who are the followers, catechumens, admirers, and bearers of these teachers, and I perceive the ichneumon of ambition to have smitten these gentlemen with fangs of no ordinary venom, for they aim to be the *head* and not the *tail*, the following consequences may be expected:

1. The strain of preaching will abound more with empty declamation, and less with good sense: for, even now, every young man that issues from their school "*out Herods Herod;*" bold assertions will take the place of arguments; and authority, that of evidence: confusion and obscurity will be gazed at, with awful solemnity, as the profound of heavenly wisdom, and a set of cant phrases consecrated as the true language of Zion.

2. The churches, even the special flock of these teachers—the most pious and discriminating among them, will not be instructed, indoctrinated, or well informed, for they will not have the means of information, being taught to regard sound reasoning asworldly wisdom, just distinctions as metaphysical poison, and the dogmas of their teachers as spiritual truth.

3. The great mass of their congregations will throng their churches from Sabbath to Sabbath, with a perfectly vacant curiosity, some to hear eloquence, as they go to hear Cooper at the theatre, not caring what he says: some to see fashions—to meet company:—very innocently believing because so taught,

that religion is a matter nowise connected with man's intellectual and moral powers, they will hear with calm indifference every thing as it comes; the anomalous monsters of the doctrine will float through their imaginations as things of course, or as an April shadow over a hill: the awful themes of guilt, sin, and damnation, reverberate from their ears as from the cold and deaf walls; and if they take the least notice of what is said, it will be only to say, "Very well, I can't help it."

4. From these immense beds of mental inaction, and moral deformity, will spring a race of "serpents," which empty declamation cannot frighten, and a reason totally blind cannot pursue or parry. In a city like this, there are great numbers of youth of elevated minds, quick conceptions, strong passions, and liberal education. They know that reason was not given to man to be trammelled with absurdities, and trampled in the dust. They will turn indignant from these "strange doctrines, and will prefer rather to follow the light of nature:" or, perhaps, they will say, "If these doctrines be true, my condition cannot be worse than it is; and at any rate, I cannot make it any better by my exertions. Let me then enjoy pleasure while I can."

These doctrines have already produced such reasonings, and such resolutions. They have already taken deep root, and shot up into an enormous growth; and while these teachers are looking abroad to other cities with proud comparison, and self-applauding pity, they have around them, and near them, in their congregations, I will not say in their churches, a myriad of unbelievers of their own forming. They are converts in *terms*, but infidels in fact. They assent with wonderful facility to all they hear. "O yes! it is all very true." And then, in the secret counsels of their own hearts, they are behind a screen at all points. They look on the deluge or the rainbow with equal eye. They hear the thunders of the law, or the accents of mercy, with equal feeling and temper. They are fortified with boldness, armed with pride, seasoned with selfishness. Talk to them about the guilt of sin; they throw it all back on Adam: about duty to God; they say, "I cannot perform it; and you teach me so." Allude to a Saviour, they reply, "Perhaps he did not die for me, and if so, there is no provision, even if I should believe; besides, you

allow, and you teach, that I am under no obligation to believe, till the Saviour shows me that I am one of his. But if I am, in reality, one of his, he will in his own time and way, shew me that I am such. Therefore, I am at rest.

Streams of error, however specious, however popular, continually pouring through a mass of population, will produce effects. Like a river whose deep and rapid waters eat and undermine its banks, they threaten extensive and inevitable destruction. If the lapse of years shall not shew, that the aggregate of people, who have steadily heard these doctrines, have become irreligious, profligate, and abandoned; if successive generations of youth who shall arise under such moral and intellectual culture, do not grow up progressively ignorant, dissolute, and profane, I shall rejoice to have it appear that my forebodings were groundless. But as I am fully aware that the divine blessing is necessary to render even the truth successful, I am equally sure that the God of truth does not crown with his blessing the ministration of error.

5. Religion itself, when it has the misfortune to spring up, or by any means be placed under this regimen, will not fail to wear an aspect sickly and repulsive; it is an exotic in these soils, and will resemble a fair plant brought from the genial climes of summer, to pine beneath the northern blast, or be smothered in the gaseous fumes of a hot-house. Error, even the abstract doctrines and speculations of theology, exerts a direct influence on a man's conduct; and there are few common maxims more false or pernicious than that if a man acts right it is no matter what his speculative notions are. Show me a strenuous believer in the doctrine of original sin, as above stated, and I will show you a man who, generally speaking, feels no very acute sense of the demerit of sin. He views it as a kind of inevitable constitution of things, which must, indeed, be just, because God is just; he views it as a kind of grand mysterious artifice, to the bottom of which he cannot see; as a kind of *technica theologica*, which never did, and never will, give any human soul any very pungent feelings. When he contemplates Adam's act, he does not feel like the murderer, who, while he washes his hands, fancies he sees the crimson stain return. The idea of guilt transferred

does not wither and blast the soul of the criminal like that of actual transgression.

Again; the man who believes in a fatal natural incapacity to obey God, derived even from the first progenitor of men, must view it with the same tone of feeling as he views transferred guilt. He did not choose the condition in which to be born, and cannot feel himself in any way accountable for it. He may, indeeed, consider it as a very bad condition, but then he had no hand in it, and can feel no blame for it, any more than a man can feel blameworthy because he was born in Europe and not in America. In a word, he views it in the same mysterious, the same technical light he does the doctrine before mentioned: and whatever he may pretend, his own heart will secretly say to him, "What I cannot do, I cannot, and why should I give myself unavailing trouble concerning it?"

Again; this Christian believes that Christ died for *him*, on which account, he thinks he loves him very much. Well, and what certain evidence of goodness is there in all this? "Do not even sinners love those that love them?" Is it a high evidence of a man's piety, that he feels grateful to any one who has done him a great favour?—Surely not. But to maintain their ground here, they are pushed forward to say that there is, in fact, no such thing as *disinterested love*. They even endeavour to throw ridicule upon the phrase, as without meaning—a phrase as old as our language, and conveying an idea as old as religion itself. But, for this, they have a very obvious motive; because it presents a sword, if I may so say, to the very bosom and heart of their scheme. But there is another term which worries them still more than this, and that is *selfishness*—they cannot bear it; they wince under it, and would fain endeavour to expunge that also from our language. To use a low comparison, it offends them as deeply as it did the tailor, in the old story, to hear the name of *cracklouse*. "So saying, thou reproachest us also." They seem to feel that their scheme is a selfish one. And if, in fact, to make our own interest and happiness the highest and ruling motive of our conduct, may be termed selfishness, their scheme of religion is purely selfish.

And while I cast no personal reflections, I do not hesitate to

say, that men ardently attached to these speculative notions, have never been found to be remarkably benevolent in their conduct. They are accused of sourness, bigotry, narrowness. I appeal to the eye of the public. Let every man judge for himself. There are certainly exceptions to this remark: but even numerous and splendid exceptions cannot impair a general rule.

Let the word *selfishness* be expunged from our language, because certain religious sectarians avow it to be right, yet do not relish the term on account of a popular odium attached to it:—expunge also the word *disinterested*, partly because an unmeaning term, though Addison, Johnson, Watts, Tillotson, and Baxter, knew its meaning well, and thought it important and appropriate, when applied to certain actions: and partly because, if it mean any thing, its meaning is far too pure and lofty to be applied to fallen man:—expunge also the term *virtue*, because they say there is no such thing in either saints or sinners, and you will avoid much cause of offence to the advocates of these doctrines. But when you find a man avowedly selfish, never disinterested, and never virtuous, what sort of a man will he be? I answer, in religion he will be an *Essene*;—full of contemplation—high frames—heated zeal—lofty conceits—great confidence—and much holier than others;—but he is as soon cold as hot. In the world, and in business, he is steady to his text;—*selfish*—never *disinterested*—and not *remarkably virtuous*. Yes, he vibrates rapidly from the ardours of Vesuvius, to the chill of Greenland—burning or freezing whatever he touches. This is what I call an Antinomian.

The question is, how a religion of this complexion will affect the character, morals, and future welfare of this great city. A question of a moment;—a question in which religious teachers have some concern, since they are answerable for its effects. Foster has shown, in his Essay on that subject, why men of taste and learning are often found to despise religion. He says, it is because it is frequently obtruded upon their attention in a garb unsuitable to its character: and, I say, oftener because its lovely features are distorted—its glorious doctrines perverted—though, oftener still, because they are unfriendly to the carnal mind. If the officers sent to apprehend our Saviour, when they heard him,

cried out, "Never man spake like this man!"—the man of taste and learning, who hears these doctrines, will cry out in a similar manner, but with a different import.

Alas! I foresee the effects of the scheme; and I remark, in the last place,

6. If its most pious and devout followers derive from it an aspect unlovely and repulsive—if it obscure the beauties of religion, it will surely present no barrier to vice:—if it deform the noblest system of truth ever presented to the human mind, it will no less facilitate the advancement of dangerous errors, with progressive influence, and with the power of an extended lever. When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment, Felix trembled. There is a power in gospel truth to carry conviction to the heart, which shall influence men's conduct—which shall impose at least a partial restraint, though the work be not profound, and the reformation total and lasting. But it is the singular infelicity of these doctrines, not to *impose*, but to *remove* restraint; to promote pride, and not humility:—it is not the trumpet of alarm, but the deadly soporific potion, that lulls to security, inaction, and repose. Nothing but a consciousness of wilful neglect can awaken the mind to a sense of guilt:—nothing but transgressions, far nearer home than Adam, points the soul to the dark avenue of perdition.

The extent and prevalence of the influences of these doctrines, in this city, is a proof that God intends to scourge it. They will not produce reformation. They will not stimulate people to good works; and as they sweep off all pretensions to moral virtue at one blow—all due consciousness of guilt, at another—all efforts to obtain salvation, at a third—they shut the book of God, and substitute for its dictates the expositions of a set of men who unblushingly profess to be *selfish* and *interested* in all they do.

I have hitherto taken no notice of the ulterior consequences of these tenets, or the influence they will exert on the eternal interests of mankind. I have considered religious institutions as a civil or political good. In this light I am concerned to perceive this unwholesome strain of public instruction gradually undermining the main pillars of moral, consequently, of social virtue.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. V.

I SAID the catechumens, admirers, and special flock of these teachers, had not the means of becoming thoroughly indoctrinated in the various subjects of revelation. They seldom go out of the triangle, unless it be by some of those fortunate self contradictions, in which they unconsciously stumble into the field of truth. They then sometimes speak well for a few minutes.

"Purpureus pannus qui splendeat unus et alter."

But these scattered, splendid patches, are not shades which heighten the beauties of a picture, but accidental lights which discover the terrors of a dungeon. There is another privation far more to be lamented than this. The throngs of people who statedly attend their instructions are carefully prevented from imbibing any different system. Even in this land of liberty and free discussion, it is incredible with what success these practices are attempted. The people, for the most part, are persuaded, every man, to put on his own bandage about his eyes and ears. Those who would not readily do that, are effectually cut off from all access to light by other means. The bustle, business, and hurry of a great city prevents thousands from taking time for much inquiry. As to books, they are good or bad, at once, according to the ipse dixit of Dr. Buckrum, for who is so good a judge as he?—As to preaching, every preacher is eventually excluded from their pulpits, unless he is known to be a faithful disciple of their scheme; i. e. triangular—and their people are most assiduously dissuaded from going to other churches, even occasionally. If any one, who has by chance ascended one of their desks, happens to strike on a string which does not vibrate in unison with theirs, they are offended—they clamour, censure, inveigh; he is accused of gross indelicacy, and high presumption. But, as for them, they never quit their triangle, preach where they will, or when they may; nor do they fail to call to their aid whatever they can command of argument, satire, or ridicule.

I hope I shall not be thought censorious, but, however that

may be, I shall not refrain from the truth, which is unchangeable and immortal. These gentlemen, in manœuvring, occasionally display two sets of colours. There needs no greater proof of this than the book before alluded to, on "*general communion.*" Had the author's pen been plucked from the wings of the graces, and dipped in the colours of the rainbow:—had the leaves of his book been composed of the flowers, and perfumed with the dews of Paradise, it could not have been a more charitable, loving, bland production. But is the man always so? Was he so when he expelled Mr. D —— from his seminary?

Who does he expect to allure to his arms by this gentle warbling on the soft tones of love and union? Surely, none of the mighty multitude of Christians composing three-fourths of that profession in the United States; for he has cut them all asunder by one expulsion. Had they but one neck, he would serve them as Nero wished to serve the Romans, i. e. in an ecclesiastical sense. He has put them all into the "snare of the Devil," and declared them not to be endured, NO, NOT FOR AN HOUR. His book reminds me of the fabled songs of the Syrens:—but I suspect few will approach the rocks, for many know the voice.

These gentlemen, at certain times, and when in certain companies, have been heard to say, that "These differences of opinion about doctrines *are more in words than ideas;* that they are of small moment—ought not to interrupt the harmony of Christians—that, after all, we all think essentially alike," &c.—But, at other times, they speak a far different language: they cry out, "delusion!—heresy!—blasphemy!" And this is what I call two sets of colours, to be used as occasion may serve.

But their most terrible argument, and which they keep always at hand, ready to dispense to weak and credulous people, is worthy of particular attention. When any one attacks their scheme, they immediately exclaim, "That man is not a Calvinist." As though Calvin and Christ stood on equal footing. This argument is intended to strike their adversaries dumb, and carry the world before it. The Mahometans seem to prefer Mahomet to Christ because he was nearer their own times: this may not be the case with those humble devotees to Calvin: but they regard

his authority as supreme and paramount. I am sorry to add, that, in this respect, there seem to be several little microscopic Calvins about this city, growing fast in strength and stature.

Could the decline of the Christian church be traced to its real causes; could the seeds of those fatal errors, the germ of those deep apostacies be discovered, which have spread ruin and darkness through Christendom, they would appear to lie in this, viz. a substitution of the authority of men for the word of God. Their language is, "that is, indeed, the word of God, but *I am its expositor*, and you must follow my expositions." Hence have originated creeds, formularies, liturgies, confessions of faith, standards, bulls. But this is not the end. These creeds and standards are but ink and paper. They must have an expositor. One is at hand.————These expositors "are the men, and wisdom shall die with them." It is the invariable policy of ambitious men to keep one on the pinnacle of power and grandeur. They then have nothing to do but shove and clamber. But these men are far from doing as Calvin did. Calvin rose by his own energy and merit. These men are endeavouring to ascend the slippery steep on the merits and favour of Calvin.

It is, I believe, but four or five years since a number of wise heads were laid together to beat down and crush the errors of a set of men denominated *Hopkinsians*, who, by the by, follow Hopkins about as much as I wish to follow Calvin. What method did they take?—They employed a catspaw to write a book entitled THE CONTRAST. In the solemn trumpery of 500 pages there are a great many instances called up, in which these Hopkinsians are said to differ from Calvin; as though this was sufficient to condemn them. But in order to affect this dreadful work, this writer, or his masters rather, were obliged to get both Hopkins and Calvin on the rack, to garble, dissect, distort, and misrepresent, many passages, in the most huge and flagrant manner. But no matter; many people were made to believe that Hopkins differed from Calvin; and that was sufficient. If Calvin believed that a rat's tail was five inches long, and Hopkins asserted it was seven, it was abundant; "*the Contrast*" was clearly and ably made out; and Hopkins was in an error, though the rat's tail had never been measured.

But I shall here despatch what I have to say of Calvin in a few words :—I believe in many doctrines, perhaps in most, taught by Calvin, but not in all. He was a man of great energy of mind and decision of character, and, I trust, a religious man. The haughtiness and acerbity of his temper I dislike, and, as an ecclesiastical pioneer and legislator, he more resembled Lycurgus than Solon. From the persecution he suffered, one might have imagined his mind would have been blanched from such foul stains as intolerance and persecution ; but it was the spirit of the age in which he lived :—" fuit temporum culpa non ejus." Could Calvin have lived a century ;—could his design have been ripened into action, and his wishes crowned with success, he would have made Geneva the head of the Protestant church, and himself the head of Geneva. If in this, and some other respects, he resembled Cromwell, he differed from him in that he was a far better, more upright and honest man. Less bold and intrepid than Luther, less amiable and benevolent than Melancthon, he was more acute, penetrating, and industrious than either, and was the most thorough, severe, and independent reformer of the three.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. VI.

When you rouse a nest of prejudices, especially those which are fortified by interest and popularity, you may be assured they will sting like wasps and hornets : nay, they would often " sting their victim dead," had they power. This has been the true source of religious persecution. Love of truth never raised a persecution : that frightful demon " is made of sterner stuff." It springs from ambition—a desire to govern the opinions of others ; and a religious ambition is by far the worst, the most rancorous, the most hateful and unreasonable specimen of its kind that ever infested the world ; it is a direct invasion of the rights of conscience—an atrocious and infamous invasion

of the rights of God and man. A man wishes me to think as he does, in order that I may subserve his purposes; not considering that I have the same right to my opinions that he has to his.

For example, I have my own opinions concerning *Original Sin*, *Depravity*, and *Atonement*. Why should a man be angry at me because I think for myself on these subjects? Why should he, when he meets me in the street, cock up his nose, knit his eyebrows, shrug his shoulders, look askance, and glide by me like a basalisk, whose very silence tells me how much venom he has got in his bag? I should not define these traits so readily and so closely, but I have seen them so often, that I am like the English sculptor who has visited Italy, and of course takes nothing from the descriptions of others. It is not merely because he is a nascent microscopic Calvin—or, if I may so speak, a *Calviniculus*, and therefore wishes me to think like his great master. No:—he is not so *disinterested* as all that. It is because I dare be independent enough to think differently from him, and, therefore, do not follow in his train. His own conscience will not allow him, for a moment, to harbour the idea that he is led to this conduct from the love of truth. The love of truth renders men meek, amiable, and candid—generous, affectionate, and condescending. Besides, who is to be the judge of truth?—I have the same right to judge for myself that he has. We are both equally accountable to God for our opinions.

We know not how the heavenly bodies move; yet we perceive their motions uniform, grand, and beautiful. The constitution under which creatures exist in this world, though it is mysterious, yet we perceive it to be universal, regular, and unalterable. One of its first and most obvious laws is, that all creatures, which come into being in a series of generations, have power to propogate that series, and that every creature shall produce its own likeness. Whatever of mystery there may be in this constitution, it appears upon inspection to be necessary, useful, and beautiful. If a bramble could spring from the grape, a thorn from an olive tree;—if a dove could produce a serpent, or a lamb could spring from a tiger, all order and harmony—all security, usefulness, and beauty, would fall sacrifices to universal disappointment, confusion, deformity, and misery.

Man, though the noblest of terrestrial creatures, by the sovereign constitution of his Maker, exists under this general law:—and it is admitted and believed, that, had our first parents remained in a state of rectitude, they would have continued happy and immortal; and that all their posterity would have, in these respects, been like them. Whatever mankind derive from their first parents must, by the divine constitution, resemble the source from whence derived; and experience shows that they have derived a nature, which, when matured into action, will act sinfully. Hence their nature is properly said to be corrupt, and they are in scripture called, "degenerate plants of a strange vine." But blame cannot be charged to the account of any creature prior to, and exclusive of, the consideration of his own voluntary disposition and conduct.

I beg the reader to examine the preceding few remarks; to divest himself of all prejudice in favour of names and authorities, and he will perceive that they are almost self-evidently true. If the subject may be illustrated by the analogy which it bears to the constitution of the natural world, Adam was constituted the head of the human race, in the same sense that the first apple tree was constituted the head of apple trees; or the first lion the head of all lions; and all lions acted in the first lion, as all mankind acted in Adam.

The word of God teaches that *the human race were ruined by the fall of our first parents.* It was so from the sovereign constitution already stated. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, wherefore death hath passed upon all men, for that *all have sinned.*" If, in consequence of Adam's fall, all his posterity derived from him a sinful nature, then it is proper to say, that, "*by the offence of one, many were made sinners;*" and so, of necessity, "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

If nothing depended on the exposition of these passages of St. Paul, it must be admitted that this mode of expounding them is fair and liberal. Indeed, it is clear, that by these expressions he means to allude to the grand constitution already explained, and which experience every moment illustrates before our eyes. But important consequences flow from a right understanding of

these and sundry similar passages of scripture. For, if they are understood to establish the idea that Adam's crime, guilt, and character, are in fact transferred to his descendants, prior to the consideration of their own moral character; if they are condemned for his act, independently of their own, then the first principles of immutable and eternal justice are supervened and destroyed, and innumerable solemn and express declarations of holy writ are contradicted.

"What mean ye that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?—As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold! all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die.* The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father the iniquity of the son. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal, are not your ways unequal?"

But these words were addressed particularly to the house of Israel. What then? They go, unequivocally, to the main point for which I contend; and establish it with great force and clearness. God here condescends to vindicate his character from the charge thrown on it by the house of Israel, which was that *his way was unequal.* He, therefore, by a solemn oath, delares they shall no longer use that proverb, which indicates the imputation of guilt, and transfer of character from father to son. "All souls are mine. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," &c. The equality and justice of the divine government are predicated on this declaration, and do certainly depend essentially on the truth of it: and it is fairly and strongly implied, that, *were the son condemned for the sin of his father, the way of God would not be equal.*

Some, indeed, evade these remarks and conclusions by saying, humorously, that Ezekiel was rather inclined to Armnianism. Alas, for poor Ezekiel and James! they neither of them stand very high in the opinion of the hyper-calvinist: they were rather lax.

It never entered into the heart of any of the sacred and inspired writers, from Moses to St. John, that Adam's posterity

were any otherwise involved in this crime and guilt than that human nature was originally and entirely corrupted in consequence of his apostacy. The first parents being sinful, frail, mortal, and miserable, such are their offspring. The doctrine of a real transfer of character, and imputation of guilt, over and above all this, would suppose "*the children's teeth to be set on edge*" with a vengeance. Yet volumes have been written to make it out; absurdities have been heaped upon absurdities; thousands of pages have been written to show that we all acted in Adam; and men have strained their eyes to see how that could be, till they become bloodshot—nay, even blind. And they remind me of Erasmus' story of seven men, who went to take a ride, one clear fine day, with Poole. As they were riding along the road, Poole, to make himself sport, looked up into the heavens, and suddenly crossing himself in pretended surprise, declared he saw in the sky a monstrous dragon with fiery horns, and his tail turned up into a circle. They all, very much astonished at the declaration, looked up, but saw nothing. "Can't you see it," continued Poole, "*It is there!* You must certainly be blind. Amazing! How terrible it looks. Don't you see it yet? Oh! I never saw such a sight in all my life before. You certainly must see it." In short, after a while, one, a little more credulous than the rest, said, I think I do see it. Yes, yes—I see it plainly. At this, another fancied he saw it. And, says Erasmus, some, by force of imagination, others fearing they should be thought less sharp-sighted than the rest, confessed they saw it: and they soon all came in, without a dissenting voice. The next day a particular account of the prodigy was published in the papers, authenticated by the testimony of six or seven credible men.

To candid, unprejudiced men, I shall use but one argument to prove we did not act in Adam; and that is, because we did not exist till long after Adam left the world.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. VII.

Depravity consists in the want of holiness, or, if you please, love of sin; and has no connexion, strictly speaking, with a man's ability to do right or to do wrong. In this sense I consider mankind by nature as totally depraved, for they have no love to God, to his law, or government, or gospel. They have no incapacity to do right but what arises from their love to do wrong; there is no bar in the way of their doing their *whole duty*, but their disinclination to do it. Their love of sin, though voluntary, is so decided and uniform, their disinclination to obey God, though free, is so determined and strong, that some have been pleased, for the sake of distinction, to term it a *moral inability*.

If it must be admitted as a perfection and felicity, in any language when it is stored with words and phrases fully adapted to express, without tedious circumlocution, the various ideas we may wish to convey, it surely cannot be denied that the phrase, *moral inability*, is both useful and necessary. If it be convenient to have a phrase which shall express, in a clear and simple manner, the impediment which arises from a strong disinclination to do a thing, or a voluntary determination not to do it, the phrase before us is convenient. I am unable to pluck the sun from his station in the heavens; this is called a natural inability. I am unable to ascend a tower and throw myself down; this is a moral inability. And, using words according to their common and popular import, in the former of these cases there is a want of ability; in the latter a want of *will*.

However the sinner's inability may be considered, whether natural or moral; whether in want of ability, or in want of will, one thing is certain, the above distinction exists, and has been recognized by the ablest, most perspicuous, and most classical writers in our language, and probably in all languages. Indeed, there is not a day passes, there is scarcely an occurrence in which this phraseology is not adopted; and I am bold to say, none use it oftener than those very persons who inveigh so bitterly against *moral inability* as an idle and useless distinction. Every body, learned and unlearned, old and young, use the phrase, and under-

stands it. Every one is in the habit of saying, when he feels an utter disinclination to do a thing, "I cannot do it;" When he is determined not to do a certain act, "I cannot do it: I am unable to do it." This phrase prevails in all sorts of business, on all occasions, in all books, and in all languages, and the man who condemns the distinction has nothing to shield him from the charge of dishonesty but incorrigible ignorance.

Now, no great stretch of metaphysics is necessary to perceive, that if it be proper for me to say I cannot do an act, merely because I am determined not to do it, it is proper also to call that a moral inability, to distinguish it from that inability which arises from want of power.

Having shown what I mean by a moral inability; having said, as I think, enough to put the adversaries of this distinction both to silence and to shame, I now proceed to observe, in brief, that mankind labor under no other kind of inability to perform the whole duty which God requires of them. In proof of this, had I time, I might quote almost the entire volume of Scripture. Were a hundred prisoners chained, like Baron Trenck, by massy links and staples to the floor and walls of their prison, should a man go into the prison and begin to exhort them to hasten out without delay; what would they think of him? they would take him either for a tyrant come to insult their helplessness, or for a madman or an idiot; and they would reply to his exhortation, do you not see these chains? why do you insult us?

An exhortation or command to do a duty, always implies a belief in the one who exhorts, that he, to whom the exhortation is given, is capable of doing the duty enjoined upon him. If this great principle be denied, the plainest dictates of common sense and justice are abolished and done away, and the Bible becomes a book of riddles and contradictions. It is, indeed, such gross perversion of the plainest dictates of reason, justice, and common sense, that has filled all christendom with infidels, atheists, and apostates;—that has shrouded the Christian church with darkness—filled her with impurity and rottenness, and smitten her with decline and consumption.

A great part of the Bible is made up of exhortations, persuasions, and commands to mankind, to forsake their sins, and to

love and obey God. But a set of preachers come forward and employ a large portion of all their sermons in persuading people that they cannot do any of these things, which God, and his prophets and apostles have exhorted and commanded them to do, any more than they can pluck the sun from the heavens. And when one endeavours to relieve the difficulty, by showing that their inability is only of the moral kind, consisting in want of will, and not of power, an outcry is raised, he is hooted and accounted as an Arminian, and the people assured, over and over again, that their inability is a true and natural incapacity, or want of power.

Every one knows that universal assent, ("*quod est norma loquendi,*") has rendered it as proper for me to say, I cannot throw myself into a furnace, or from a precipice, as it is to say, I cannot overturn a mountain. But these "*cannots*" are of a very different character—one is a mere want of will, the other is a total want of power. What rational ground of objection is there to calling one a natural, the other a moral inability? The distinction is clear—it is easily perceived—it is useful; for, in fact, none is more used; it is necessary, because no other simple phrase can express it. Who does not percieve how it alters the case, whether a man is prevented from doing his duty by want of will, or by want of power? And, I add, this distinction applies to one of the most important doctrines of religion. Yet these triangular divines cannot perceive it; but their *cannot* is a *will not.* And how hard it is to make a man see what he will not; for none are so blind as those who will not see. If you even seize them by the shoulders, and turn them by main strength round towards the object, they will then turn away their face. But if you force their heads round in the direction, they will then shut their eyes; force open their eyelids, and they roll away their eyeballs.

The violent opposition to this grand and obvious distinction arises from this, that, if once admitted, their scheme of depravity is overthrown. Their successful opposition is, to them, worth as much as victory.

The scripture writers wrote long before modern controversies had given a technical meaning to half the terms in theology;

long before the church had been dressed up in the stays of Aristotle, or tricked out in the rags, ribands, and fringes of oriental philosophy. They stood in no fear of the pedantic square and compasses of the learned Dr. Buckram. Their style, though bold and figurative, was free and popular, and easy to be understood. Indeed, as to the great doctrines of religion, it is easy to be understood by us, at this distant day, except where covered by the cobwebs of biblical critics, and entangled, by the bewildered and bewildering brains of learned theorists, who sit plodding in their studies, till they become enveloped in clouds and vapours, and are fairly led into the great, *great dismal*, by an ignis fatuus; or, like one of the most learned and best of men, imagine themselves a teapot.

It is impossible to follow the strain of exhortation which flows unceasingly through the Old and New Testament, and not perceive that it was given on the full persuasion and assurance that men are fully able to do what they are exhorted to do; that their only impediment lies in the will, and is, of course, their crime; whereas, if it lay in want of power, it would be their excuse. But I am mortified, I blush for human nature, that it is necessary to insist on this point. That it should ever have been doubted, is full proof of moral depravity—of wilful blindness.

Those who insist on a true and natural inability in the sinner to obey God, furnish him with the best excuse imaginable; for he will say, I cannot do right, and, therefore, I am not to blame. Whereas, those who lay all the blame on the will, devest him of all excuse, and effectually convince him of criminality. And this is probably the clue to that flaming zeal to abolish the distinction of moral inability evinced by many, and the readiness to embrace the doctrine of these teachers, by a still greater number. While paying, as they imagine, a profound compliment to the shrine of humility, they find their pride and sloth sufficiently gratified.

But the advocates and disseminators of error have generally sterner and more cogent motives than are intrinsical to their system, otherwise their mighty structures would soon crumble to their foundation, and vanish "into air—thin air." These motives grow out of their particular circumstances: in short, they

are selfish motives, arising from interest and ambition. And, surely, the professed champions of selfishness cannot be disgusted with the charge of a little selfishness, since they assume the thing charged by avowing the principle. Their selfish motives I shall hereafter notice.

If the term inability be at all applicable to a man when nothing impedes him but disinclination, the sinner's inability must be pronounced wholly of the moral kind. This can be shown, to a degree of certainty approaching as near to mathematical demonstration as any proposition of an abstract and moral nature. It was far from the design of these numbers to enter into the details of argument; and it shall suffice to say, that the sinner can do his whole duty, because that duty is easy, and adapted to the powers and faculties of all rational minds. If it be easy to believe what is made clearly evident, and to love that which is infinitely beautiful, the sinner's duty is easy. The sinner can do his duty because that duty is prescribed by an infinitely wise and good being, who knows how to adapt his requirements to the capacities of his creatures, and whose wisdom and goodness are manifested by that adaption. That nothing prevents him from conforming to all divine requirements but want of will to do it, is evident from the whole word of God, in which his nonconformity is invariably placed on that footing alone, and is in no place ascribed to any other cause. The continual exhortations and commands of God show us how God himself estimates the sinner's ability; and the duty to perform, and the ability to perform it, are the exact measures of each other; in short, obligation and ability correspond, and run parallel with each other, and cease together. All just notions of the nature and powers of a moral agent, set this point in the clearest light; and when I hear a man begin to talk about a moral agency to do wrong, but not to do right, I feel myself much in the predicament of St. Anthony when lecturing the fishes: and did I not know that a moral agent might be very ignorant, I should almost be tempted to deny that exalted rank to such superlative ignorance.

To believe in absurdities, and things evidently false, and to practise supposed impossibilities, requires, indeed, a monstrous stretch of faith, and an incredible degree of power; perhaps

these strenuous advocates of man's natural, or, if you please, physical inability, get that idea from the peculiar complexion of their scheme. I am willing, for one, to do them the justice to confess that I labor under a *true natural inability* to believe in their doctrines, or practice, agreeably to their faith.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. VIII.

My present object is, without descending to elaborate argument, to convey, in as few words as possible, what I understand to be the scripture doctrine of the atonement of Christ.

As the death of Christ is generally allowed to be a propitiatory sacrifice, if those who are concerned to understand the doctrine of the atonement would consider attentively in what way, or on what principle, the death of Christ made propitiation for sin, I think there could be but one opinion concerning the atonement. But, utterly overlooking this grand point, and resorting to metaphors and comparisons which have but few points of resemblance to the great subject in question, embarrassment, confusion, and error have found their way into one of the plainest doctrines of the Bible.

The advocates of what may be called *particular* atonement amuse and edify themselves by continually resorting to certain expressions and passages of scripture, such as that *Christ died for his people, laid down his life for the sheep*, &c. never considering that they have no right to monopolize these expressions as supporting their scheme. If Christ tasted death for every man, he certainly did so for his people. If he were a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, he certainly was for the sins of his elect. If he laid down his life for all mankind, he surely did so for his sheep.

The metaphor of *debt* and *credit* has done infinite mischief in this business. They consider the elect as owing a debt to justice, which Christ has paid; and his payment is of course passed to their credit; so that they then have a legal right to demand par-

don and justification; and this demand is sometimes made in their prayers and religious exercises, in a manner so bold and daring, as to shock the humble and penitent Christian. Yet, after all, they appear never to have considered how it is that the death of Christ makes propitiation for sin, or pays the debt they so much talk of; and, if so, they are profoundly ignorant of the nature of the atonement. But if they do not understand its nature, how can they judge correctly of its *extent*?

The curse of the law of God is his displeasure, expressed in the punishment of transgression. But why is the law of God penal?—What end is to be answered by the punishment of the transgressor? It is not because God takes delight in the misery of his creatures, for its own sake. It is not to repair the breach of the law, for that is impossible: what is done cannot be undone. It is not to reclaim the offender, for it does not do it. It is, in one word, *to show God's hatred of sin*, and, in the same degree, his love of holiness. This is indeed the object of penalty under human governments: it is to show the displeasure of the supreme authority at transgression.

The penalty of the divine law is the only mean of showing to intelligent creatures God's hatred of sin. If the obedient and disobedient fared equally well under God's government, there could be no distinction made between sin and holiness. When a sinner is punished, all rational creatures, who see it, perceive how the Almighty Ruler regards transgressions, and they will fear to transgress: at the same time, they see how God honours his own law, by the terrible manifestation of his displeasure; and they will be led to honour the same.

When Christ endured the curse of the law, the same discovery was made of God's hatred of transgression—the same, of his regard for his own law: though, perhaps, in a still more striking form than when sinners are punished for their own sins. Christ, therefore, made propitiation for sin, by his death, by completely answering thereby the great end of penalty, or the death of the sinner.

This I understand to be the nature of the atonement or propitiation of Christ; and it differs essentially from all notions of debt and credit, in the following particulars:—

1. The two cases are entirely different in their general nature, as, in strictness, the one is criminal, the other civil: the former involving the principles of a purely retributive justice, the latter a justice that is strictly commutative: there being no resemblance between the pardon of a criminal and the release of a debtor.

2. The two cases are different in all their forms and circumstances. The satisfaction to justice is a general principle; the payment of a debt a partial and local act.

3. As a criminal process always originates from, and is in favour of, the public or state, the satisfaction it demands is also a public satisfaction; except where private and particular injury is sustained, which justice will also remedy by private and particular satisfaction: but a civil action of debt, for instance, is always in favour of one or more individuals, or individual bodies, and recovers a satisfaction to an individual, &c.

4. A propitiatory satisfaction does never, from its own nature, give the criminal a legal right to demand his discharge; since it neither obliterates his crime, nor, in any degree, lessens his guilt; and though it vests that right in the propitiator, it imposes on him no obligation to exercise it, unless he has bound himself so to do by promise. Whereas, the payment of a debt is but the answer of a private demand, which demand it cancels, and in return empowers the debtor to demand his discharge.

I have pointed out some, but not all, of the differences between the payment of a debt and a propitiatory satisfaction. And I believe any man will find himself puzzled to point out one exact feature of resemblance between them.

If I might use the terms of law, an action from the whole universe lies against every sinner: the essential rights of all beings demand his punishment, for transgressing the law of God. The Son of God undertakes to make propitiation for sin, to magnify the law, and make it honorable, and yet show mercy to the sinner. But here the objection comes forward with an importunate question: "For whom did Christ undertake to make satisfaction? For whom did he make propitiation?" This question shows that the querist has fixed in his mind the payment of a debt

which we have shown bears but a faint and remote resemblance to the subject in hand. But this question admits, not only of one, but of various satisfactory answers.

1. The nature of Christ's propitiation for sin shows it to be an unlimited general principle. In sustaining the curse of the law, he showed in the greatest possible degree God's hatred of sin, and in the same degree magnified the law, and made it honourable. We are not to understand that the propitiation, or satisfaction, of justice must vary, and be greater or less according to the number to be saved. Yet this is clearly implied in the payment of a debt, and is certainly the idea of those who hold to particular atonement. They seem to imagine that all the sins of the elect, forming a certain amount, are estimated, and propitiation made for them. In this lies their error. They ought to know that God has not shown his hatred of sins by the death of Christ, either by number or amount, but, on the contrary, that he has shown an infinite abhorrence of all sin, and an infinitely high regard for the honour of his law. They cannot but perceive that as much as this would have been necessary to propitiate justice, had there been but one sinner to save, and certainly no more is possible were all men to be saved.

According to their own principles, before considered, if one sin were sufficient to involve not only one man, but a whole race of creatures in infinite guilt and endless perdition, they must allow that, after Adam's first sin, he alone could not have been saved, but by the whole propitiation which Christ has made. And, at any rate, it must be admitted, that had there been but one man, and had he committed but one sin, we have no means of perceiving how he could have obtained pardon and salvation, but through a full and complete propitiation for sin.

We cannot, therefore, infer that Christ made propitiation for the elect only, from any limitation or deficiency in the atonement. The vicarious sufferings of Christ were, in all respects, the same as they would have been had he intended to die for the whole world:—the same his humiliation—his sufferings—his condescension—his death.

2. I think I have heard gentlemen who held to a particular

atonement, acknowledge that there was merit or efficacy enough in Christ's atonement to save not only this, but a thousand worlds. Though I thought the expression somewhat unguarded, yet indeed, if a propitiation so full and perfect was made, in what way can any one contrive to limit it to a certain part of mankind? The word of God makes no such limit, but informs us that he actually did *make propitiation for the sins of the whole world;* that he had tasted death for every man; that he died for *all;* that in him should all nations be blessed, and that his gospel should be glad tidings to *all people.*

I am fully aware that a reply is ready for all these passages, and a thousand more; and I am also aware that religious disputes are now maintained, not by simple scripture authority, but by scripture filtrated through the conflicting opinions of great and learned critics, expositors, and casuists; against whom a point-blank text of scripture is as a dart of straw thrown against Dover clifts. The shot is fair, but the rock does not fall. Tell a man what the Bible says against his scheme, and he will laugh at you; or, if he choose to dispute, he will, with a smile at your ignorance, reply, "I know very well that those are the words of scripture, but have you not read how Dr. Dogmaticus and father Fungus have explained it; and even Bishop Bigbelly is of the same opinion." You may lay your finger on your lip and retire, for you are beat; and may say with Job, on a different occasion, "If I speak I shall be swallowed up!"

This may be styled rant, and if it be even so, I deem it the only answer that is due to the bold and barefaced evasion of the plain and simple declarations of sacred writ. But taking away the fictitious, and substituting real names, and it expresses nothing but the imperishable truth. But to return—

3. The gospel, in its own nature and genuine spirit, clearly implies a propitiation for all mankind, and that through Christ the door of mercy is set open for all. The angels sent to announce the Saviour's birth to the shepherds understood it thus: "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to you and *all people,*" &c. That the invitation is made general, merely because the elect of Christ are unknown to those who preach the gospel, is a poor and pitiful shift, and renders the pro-

clamation liable to the charge of dishonesty, and the invitation, of insincerity. Should I make a dinner for but two persons, and then send out pressing invitations to ten; nay, and should threaten the whole with my utmost displeasure if they did not come; in what light would my conduct be viewed by those who knew the whole of the fact? How surprised would the two be when they come to see there was provision only for them? And as to the eight, who were invited with urgency and threatening, when they come to learn that a dinner was only made for two, what might they not justly say? They might, and would say, the invitation was false and abusive; and, had we accepted, nothing was prepared for us. Far different from this was the wedding feast of the king's son.

But the all-seeing God knows who his people are, yet he does invite all to come. "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved, saith the Lord." In fine, (for to dwell on this point seems like urging a self-evident proposition,) all the invitations of the gospel are unqualified and universal; and those who finally reject them, shall hereafter know that they rejected a sincere invitation to a full and infinitely rich provision. Nothing can set this point in a clearer light than our Saviour's own parable of the marriage of the king's son. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son; and sent forth to call those that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. And again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen, and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways. Matt. xxii. 2—5.

Can a man who reads this parable doubt of the fulness of the gospel provision for all men—of the sincerity of the invitation to all men—of the voluntariness of its rejection, and, of course, of the ability to have accepted? After reading this, can any one ask for whom Christ made propitiation? If there should be such, *ready to hale*, I can only answer him by saying, "*for the sins of the whole world*;" and leave him to furbish up his powers of evasion.

4. Infinitely more noble, more grand, more benevolent, does

the gospel plan appear, on the ground of a general atonement. If a province in the dominions of some monarch should rebel, and the monarch should, on certain terms, publish an act of grace to a certain portion of the people, telling them if they would lay down their arms, by such a day, they should obtain pardon and be restored to favour, while all the rest were doomed to inevitable destruction:—would this look as magnanimous, as great, as worthy of a mighty potentate, as though the act of grace extended to all? How much more splendid and magnificent would the proclamation run, did it state that the great sovereign had found out a ransom for the whole, provided they would accept his overtures, and bow to his sceptre.

There is reason to adore God that this is the language of the gospel: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But this language is not true, if an atonement is made for but a part. And this point, I think, has not been sufficiently brought into view. It cannot be said to one for whom no propitiation is made, "If you believe in Christ you shall be saved." It would be the meanest and basest of all quibbles, in the most sacred and awful of all concerns. It would, in fact, be nothing less than a most atrocious falsehood. Were I in a ship at sea, which was rapidly sinking, and the boat was already so filled as not to be able to hold another person, would it be correct—would it be true or decorous, should some one say to me, "Come, if you will get into the boat you may go to an island, not far off, and be saved?"—And to this I will add, especially, if I were chained fast in the hold of that vessel, and the boat already completely filled, how would it sound in my ears, should some one with great earnestness say to me, Come, go into the boat—there is an island near, and you may escape? There would be falsehood upon falsehood, and insult upon insult. This proposition would import the following things: 1. The boat will hold you. 2. You have permission to enter it; and, 3. You are able to enter it.

Whoever says to a sinner, "If you will believe in Christ you shall be saved," says to him the following things: 1st. Christ has atoned for your sins. 2d. He is willing to save you; and, 3d.

You are able to believe in him. Christ himself intended all those four things when he said to the Jews, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." For surely, if he had not died for them, to what purpose could he say they were unwilling to come to him as a Saviour. And if there were a deeper impediment than want of will, why should he ascribe their not coming to the want of will?

If there be a sinner for whom no atonement is made, that sinner could not be saved, even should he believe in Christ: moreover, if their notion of appropriating faith be true, which is, that every Christian must believe that Christ died in a particular manner for him, then, whoever exhorts that sinner to believe in Christ, exhorts him to believe a lie. Wherefore, these triangular preachers must be cautious to whom they direct their exhortations. Nor will it always avail them, though they keep close to their lines and angle.

5. The idea usually entertained of the sin of unbelief, and which none insist upon more than these preachers, corroborates the doctrine of general atonement. They generally teach that saving faith consists in the Christian's believing that Christ died for *him*. But how can a man believe that Christ died for him, when he, in fact did not die for him; and when no propitiation is made for his sins? Which side of the dilemma will they encounter? Will they allow that Christ made propitiation for all men, and thereby ground a charge of unbelief against those that do not embrace the Saviour; or will they adhere to their triangle, and at once exonerate the whole non-elect world from the sin of unbelief?

And there are innumerable declarations and facts, dispersed through all parts of the holy scriptures, which go to establish the doctrine of a general propitiation. "Behold," saith the apostle John, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," alluding probably to the words of Isaiah, who said of the Messiah, that he should *make an end of sin*, and bring in everlasting righteousness. No expression can more fully convey the idea of full and universal propitiation. And there is but one way to avoid this construction, which is, by mending up the passage by the help of another word. The word *Kosmos*, which, in the Greek

is used for world, out of eleven different meanings, furnishes no one which requires or admits an epithet before it: and I have as good a right to put before the word European, or American, ancient or modern, as any man has to put the word *elect* or *redeemed*. I believe it is nowhere in the Scriptures used to signify the church of Christ: on the contrary, it is generally used to mean the world in its most literal sense, or the people, indefinitely, who inhabit it.

The high priest of the Jews, on the trial of our Saviour, declared that it was necessary that one should die for the people. "This he spake," saith the evangelist John, "*not of himself*, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation."—By what spirit did he prophesy?—By the spirit of God.—Were the Jewish nation believers?—Did they not as a nation reject the Redeemer?—Have they not as a nation been unbelievers ever since? And yet a man prophesied by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that *Christ should die for that nation*. This is surely out of the triangle.

But to conclude this number: there is no point in the whole gospel plan, more abundantly expressed or strongly implied, than that Christ, as far as propitiation or atonement is concerned, died for all men—offered up himself a ransom for all—tasted death for every man, and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, said the Apostle to the Hebrews, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Assuring them, with all the force of reasoning and of eloquence, that salvation was brought within their reach; and virtually enforcing the accusation laid by Christ himself, in another place, against the Scribes and Pharisees, of wilfully refusing to enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves—nay, and of preventing others that would enter from going in.

Away with this contracted, limited, starved, unscriptural notion of the atonement:—it is defacing the corner stone of the Christian fabric—cutting it down to a pebble, on which the glorious superstructure cannot rest, but totters to its foundation.

It ought to be the highest glory of every gospel minister to preach "Christ the Saviour of all men, *but especially of them that believe*:" to assure mankind that the door of mercy is set open

before them, from which nothing can exclude them but their refusal to enter :—that God is long suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The gospel, deprived of these and similar topics, is defaced—its beauties tarnished—its riches wasted—its influence destroyed. "It is another gospel."

INVESTIGATOR.

No. IX.

These gentlemen, who, to save circumlocution, may, perhaps, be stiled Trigonoi, which I think they would prefer to Antimoralinabilities, beside the true and genuine wielding of the sword of the spirit, have two ways of defending their cause. One is, by casting over their whole scheme the lustre and glory of great names and authorities, such as Calvin, Turretin, Picket, Ridgely, Owen, Marshall, and the like ; shrouding under this sort of panoply, more notions which those men never thought of, than there were ever toads seen under the sweep of a rainbow after a shower. The other is, by casting an invincible odium upon their adversaries ; accusing them of holding to the most strange, dangerous, and even blasphemous sentiments : as for example, that God is the author of sin ; that people must be willing to be damned, in order to be saved ; that all sin consists in selfishness. Beside this, they have a most incurable prejudice against certain terms, which are considered to be very favourite words with some ; for instance, such terms as disinterestedness, benevolence, virtue, morality, and the like.

A paragraph or two on each of these particulars, I think will be abundant to remove the mist from the eyes of most people. I say mist ; for the filling of people's minds with causeless terrors, with these frightful words, reminds me of the mode of defence used by a certain fish, which I think is called a squid ; who, when he is pursued, throws back into the eyes of his pur-

suer a black cloudy water, whereby he loses track, and the squid escapes.

I never, in my life, heard a person say that he thought *God was the author of sin ;* though, I have personally known Hopkins, and many of his most distinguished followers. That God is somehow or other concerned in the existence of sin, is an inference, however, drawn from premises which few will deny. The illustrious assembly of protestant divides who formed the Augsburg confession of faith, with Luther and Melancton at their head, say, in that confession, that *Satan was the author of sin.* But, it is replied, Satan was once an angel of light, and if his first sin were the first sin ever committed in God's kingdom, then before his first sin, there was nothing sinful. Then, either the first sin had no cause, or must have been caused or committed by a holy being. "But this is going too far back—it is presumptuous." Ah ! quite too far back for these modest, *humble*, reasoners. They will do well to observe it goes no further back than intuitive demonstration paves the way. I will leave it for them to take which part of the dilemma they choose, and draw their own consequences.

Some people are accused of too great boldness in their reasonings. Let us see who is the most bold and irreverent. Every one believes that God existed from eternity, before sin took place in his kingdom. Would it not be very bold and impious to say that sin commenced contrary to his expectation ? Would it not be blasphemous to say that He could not have prevented the beginning of sin ? Would it not be an impeachment of all his perfections, to entertain a belief that he could even be *indifferent* concerning an event which was to change the face of his whole kingdom, to influence the condition of all creatures to eternity, and to lead the way to the grandest event which ever engaged the attention of creatures ?

What will these modest and *humble* reasoners say of the incarnation, death, resurrection, reign, and glory of the Son of God, the second person in the ever blessed Trinity ? Were these grand events merely remedial and preventive, in reference to an event no ways connected with the divine purposes ? Would it not be extravagant—would it be unscriptural to say

that the incarnation, and work of Christ, were regarded as ultimate ends, even in the creation and general providence of God, since through that work God is manifested to his creatures, and his moral kingdom brought into a closer union with him? Why, then, is Christ called the beginning of the creation of God, the first born of every creature?

God works all things after the counsel of his own will; yet, according to these modest teachers, who never pry into any thing beyond their depth, the whole plan of providence and redemption has been diverted, nay, forced into a certain channel, to obviate the effects of an event in which the agency of God had no concern. According to this doctrine, that very event, in which the divine agency had no concern, has been the means of bringing about more good than any event in which the divine agency ever was concerned.

If God had no way to produce, influence, and control events, but such as creatures use, we then might be justly alarmed at the idea of any divine agency, either direct or indirect, concerned in the existence of evil. Herein is the error of mankind; they measure the methods and motives of the divine conduct by their own. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee quickly."

These are some of the reasonings usually resorted to by those who are accused of holding that God is the author of sin. For myself, I can truly say, I ever disliked the expression, and I can say as much for many who are accused of holding to the doctrine. How far, and in what way, the divine agency was concerned in the existence of evil, after submitting the foregoing remarks, I leave every one to judge for himself. Their argument may be divided into two parts, which, lest it may be misunderstood, I shall repeat.

1. They contend, that the first sin must either have had no cause, or a holy cause. Quis protest negare?

2. They say that the consequences of sin have been far too great, and too peculiar, to admit of the supposition of indifference, or inefficiency concerning its origin, in a being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, who foresaw it. And it must be admitted, that the work of creation itself is considered in the

scriptures as subordinate, and leading to the work of redemption; since the great Redeemer is called the beginning of the creation of God, the first born of every creature. He was appointed heir of all things;—the whole universe was given him as an inheritance, even before it was created. Yet, without sin there could have been neither redemption, Redeemer, nor Immanuel. Their notion, if they have any, seems to subject us to the base and degrading idea, that the entire and eternal plan of God's kingdom and government turned upon an event concerning which he had neither will, agency, nor influence.

The clamour that is raised against certain people, who are said to hold that a sinner must be willing to be damned in order to be saved, is almost too idle and ridiculous to merit a moment's attention; yet, like the discharge of the squid, it blinds people's eyes, and scatters a great deal of fog and darkness. It is even amusing to hear them talk on the subject. "What, must I be willing to live with devils in fire and brimstone to all eternity, in order to be saved? Impossible! O, what horrible sentiments! These people must be monsters in human shape," &c.

The people accused of this most extraordinary error, as far as I have known their opinions, hold no more, on this article, than all Christians, and even the more enlightened heathen admit, together with Jews and Mahometans. They hold, that *every rational creature in heaven, earth, and hell, ought to feel perfect submission to the will of God.* Now, if this be an error, let it be made to appear such. If it be true and correct, let these tender-hearted clamourers avoid the consequences which necessarily result from it, if they can. While they hold unqualified submission to the divine will the duty of all rational creatures, they also believe that a certain degree of that submission, or resignation, belongs to the Christian character. And will any one deny it? The Christian, they say, sees that his damnation would be just, and is ready to exclaim with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." As to any one's being willing to be an enemy to God to all eternity, it is out of the question; for damnation, in strictness, implies the penalty of the law, and not the transgression of it. It is probable that every Christian is fully aware that it is not the will of God that his people should be

damned; in feeling resignation to his will, therefore, which is one evidence of their adoption, it is not implied that they feel willing to be damned.

If it be right that a wicked man should be damned, I would ask these good people, whether they think that a wicked man ought to be willing that God should do right? I fear they will detect themselves of as huge an error as they charge upon others; for, I strongly conjecture, they will not dare to say that even a wicked man does right to continue to be a rebel against God.

There is nothing on this subject worthy of notice; nothing that a man of sense and candour would waste a moment about; but, truly, the outcry that has been raised concerning this, evinces a spirit the most base, carping, and unfair. It is, indeed, not long since it was declared in a public lecture, before a great audience in this city, that *a certain sect of people held, that all virtue consisted in being willing to be damned.* This was said, if I recollect right, by the celebrated Dr. M'Fog, and is what may be called, in vulgar terms, *a thumper.* For no such thing is believed or asserted by any one. Whether a public teacher, who thus wantonly commits himself to falsehood for the sake of exciting popular odium, does thereby add any thing to the score of his faith or good works, I shall not determine.

These companions for selfishness, when they hear it asserted that all sin consists in selfishness, are, no doubt, much displeased. This opinion, though it may be maintained by some, in their metaphysical disquisitions, is peculiar to no class or denomination of people; therefore, were it never so erroneous, is not to be charged upon any scheme of theology. But wherein consists its odious enormity—or in what respect is it incorrect?

By selfishness, I mean that disposition in the mind of man which sets up the interest, honor, gratification, or happiness of himself above any other object. Now, I ask, what sin is human nature charged with, which may not easily, and directly be traced to that source? Is a man covetous? What does the increase of wealth regard but self aggrandizement and gratification? Who desires what is not his own but for that end? Whither does ambition tend? What is the source and motive of envy,

hatred, and revenge? The man of pleasure, what does he aim at? What gives rise to intrigue—perjury—treason—slander? What impels the thief—the robber—the assassin—the conqueror?

Again, I ask, whence is the reluctance of men to obey the law of God? It is because they find no gratification, no pleasure in the duties which it requires; it restrains their pleasures, and forbids the indulgence of their passions; therefore, they hate it. For the same reason they hate God himself, and prefer their own pleasure and gratification to his honour and glory.

Hence it is, that selfish men are often in danger of mistaking a kind of natural gratitude which they feel towards God, when he does them good, and prospers their enterprises, for a true and holy love to God; whereas, it is but simply the approbation and enjoyment of their own interest, as flowing from his providence. Christ himself teaches, that to love those that love us is no very exalted excellence, since he assures us, even sinners love sinners, and can feel very well disposed to requite a kindness. There is, indeed, no doubt, a great deal of supposed love to God and to Christ, which arises from the very lowest, and most unmingled selfishness. A man, by some means, imbibes a persuasion that God loves him, has done him much good, and is going to do him much more; nay, he goes further, and persuades himself that Christ died for him, and will save him. This is enough to excite his love and gratitude, and he talks how ardently he loves God, and how much devoted he is to the Saviour. This is but a concise view of the religion of these selfish teachers. They, in fact, have the boldness to assert, that the highest motive a sinner has to love God and Christ, is because he has received great favours from them, and expects still greater. They say, that abstract views of the excellency of God's character are too remote, too exalted, too far removed from human conception, to be the proper foundation of love and admiration; that, whatever they may be to higher orders of creatures, they are far too pure, exalted, and refined, to operate as motives on men.

O wretched religion! Self-deceived pretenders to godliness! O selfishness in perfection—base—miserable, and blind! A man may have all this religion, may be full of it, and full of zeal to promote it, and yet have none of the spirit of Christ. Is there

then no such thing as a divine character? Has Jesus Christ no character which can be apprehended, and supremely loved, unmingled with one consideration of self? Whence has arisen all this noise about greatness, amiableness, excellency of character, even in men; which fills all books, and which has been the highest object of admiration, panegyric, and delight, to men in all ages?

"Ah! it is all nothing:—all too remote and abstract to hit human faculties. *I can love nothing but what does me good;* I must perceive its connexion with my interest, or I cannot feel any regard for it." This is selfish language; and it is sordid enough.

The character of God is sufficiently manifested to his rational creatures to command supreme and universal love and adoration. There is no character among the heroes and patriots of history, so fully displayed—so prominently evident—so easily and clearly apprehensible. This infinitely glorious character is collected from what God has revealed of himself—his nature and attributes—his providence and grace, in his works, and in his word.

A man comes and tells me, that a neighbour of his has done him a very great kindness; has paid for him a sum of money, and rescued him from prosecution and from prison; what if I should say to him, in reply, he has, indeed, been very kind, and laid you under peculiar obligations. But I know that man well; in what he has done for you, he has evinced the character he universally possesses. He has done thousands of such acts in the course of his life, and thousands of people have shared in his beneficence. The whole of his fortune is devoted to the benefit of mankind; and the various resources of his mind are directed and exhausted in promoting all sorts of improvements; in founding hospitals, seminaries, and liberal and charitable institutions. He has made great improvements in the agriculture of his whole neighbourhood; and has done more to encourage the arts and sciences, and to promote human happiness, than any man of his time. But hold, says the man, that is all well enough, but it is nothing to me. I feel no interest in these abstract views of character. The good he may have done to

thousands, and all his great and benevolent plans, do not strike my feelings at all. Let them be extolled by those who were, or will be, *interested* in, and benefitted by them. *This man has paid a hundred dollars for me, and, therefore, I love him.* It cannot be supposed that I can be affected by the good he has done to others; and, above all, that I can be so abstract and metaphysical as to run back to consider his character and disposition, prior to the consideration of his actions, and which lie at the bottom of his conduct. That would be all nonsense, or, at best, far too refined for me. I like the man because he has done me good; he has promoted my interest, and, therefore, I can feel great regard for him.

What ought I to think of such a man?—I should, I confess, consider him as a blind, unfeeling, selfish wretch, on whom the great and liberal man had wasted his bounty, were it not that "Mercy is twice blest,

In him who gives it, and in him who takes."

So that one of the blessings will, at least, redound to the giver, however the other may affect the receiver.

Room is furnished for the rise and spread of an unlimited kingdom, through interminable space and eternal duration, in which the glorious God and Father of all has, from ancient days, poured forth emanations of his infinite goodness. In this rising and spreading kingdom, adorned with magnificence answerable to the power and wisdom of the divine architect, are placed innumerable orders of creatures. Beginning with inactive, inorganic matter, thence rising to the vegetable, then to the sensitive and animal kingdoms; and still higher to creatures of a mixed nature, composed of body and mind, and endowed with sensation and reflection; and, last of all, for here our perceptions and means of knowledge terminate, to pure spirits, with whose mode of existence and general habits we are still unacquainted. Through these immense departments of being, the great Author has manifested one character of power, wisdom, design, justice, and benevolence. Intelligence begins with man, and ascends to higher degrees of excellence in angels. But as, in our present state, we do not need the information, so the infinitely wise Teacher has not informed us concerning the various natures, numbers, orders, residences, and

powers, of superior creatures. Yet enough is communicated to assure us that, in all those respects, they are answerable to the grandeur of the kingdom in which they live, and of the God and Father whom they adore.

In ways inconceivably glorious and wonderful, God is making himself known to this great family: and as all rational creatures are immortal, there is full reason to believe these discoveries will always continue and increase; while to contemplate, admire, and adore, will be the ceaseless employment of holy intelligences, through a happy eternity.

Before the great family, the almighty Father has exhibited a character marked with the strongest lines—the most distinguished and illustrious traits. Nor is there a rational creature, whose faculties are mature according to the constitution of his nature, who cannot perceive it. Every thing, from the great frame of nature to the minutest insect, declares his power and wisdom: nor less do they declare his infinite benevolence. But the work of redemption more especially brings into light, and fully illustrates, his moral perfections. Nor is it likely that this work is concealed from any of his intelligent creatures: nor is it viewed with less interest, delight, or astonishment, by those pure intelligences who never fell, than it is or will by those for whom the benefits of redemption are immediately designed; while, on the contrary, the redeemed will rejoice with equal fervour in beholding divine goodness, like a mighty river, flowing from the throne of God, and dispensing itself abroad in immortal streams, to enrich, adorn, and glorify the whole intelligent system.

Can it be believed that the base and loathsome doctrine of selfishness is violently intruded, by these teachers, even into this theme? Yes: they will tell you that every christian, yea, every saint, will be so completely occupied with the high importance of his own happiness, that he will not be able to perceive any stronger motive of love to God, than *because God has done good to him;* and that this, of course, will be the rule of his attachment to all beings. May God dispel the clouds that hang around them, and enlarge the ken of their mental vision: may he break up this frozen winter of selfishnes in their souls, and warm them with holy love.

Religion does not render a man indifferent to happiness, but it shows him his own comparative nothingness and insignificance in the great kingdom of Jehovah; and all the acts of divine goodness and mercy to him, and to the whole human race; all the blessings which all creatures receive from God, show him clearly that these streams of goodness proceed from one boundless, exhaustless ocean. And who that comes in sight of the ocean, in which islands and continents are all embosomed, will not be ready to forget streams and rivers, which all proceed from thence and return thither?

But, the shameless and strenuous vindication of selfishness, so prominent in the conversation, preaching, and, I am sorry to add, in the conduct of these teachers, for they are all of a piece—the virulence with which they attack all idea of disinterestedness, even in the great concerns of religion, leaves room to fear that the pursuit of self-interest is their supreme object. Perhaps, indeed, they will own the charge, and feel willing to abide the consequences. If so, I pray God to show them that he has a character which challenges their supreme regard; and that he would teach them to approve and love every thing according to its real value, whether it directly tends to promote their private interest or not. This is what I call *disinterested benevolence*, and is fully implied in the great precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself."

INVESTIGATOR.

No. X.

I TRUST it will be admitted that the reformation of the church is by no means completely accomplished. I am sorry to be compelled to add, that this "consummation, so devoutly to be wished," is kept back and delayed, in part, by the church itself; or, more correctly speaking, by individuals in its bosom, who having acquired some influence, use that influence to its utmost extent,

not merely in retarding the vessel, so long "afflicted and tossed with tempests," on her voyage, but by striving to lay her course backward, and to carry her again towards the dark and stormy coast she left ages ago. Of this I have given some intimations in the preceding numbers. It shall be the business of the present number to assign my reasons for this assertion. Whether I shall substantiate it, I leave the reader to judge; and I appeal to an enlightened public, who can have no interest in wishing to be deceived by the "*cunning craftiness of man.*"

I appeal to the city, nay, to the consciences of the men with whose motives I have made so free, and shall still make more free, and whose doctrines I oppose. For conscience does not always go hand in hand with the clamours of contempt nor always sanction the soft flattery of parasites, or the loud hosannas of the multitude. It sometimes has happened that while a man decorates his brow with the dignified smile of self-approbation, stern conscience goads his heart, and points him to an awful and impartial tribunal.

From the seventh to the fifteenth century, an age of darkness covered the remnant of the civilized nations of the earth, the church was in the wilderness, and spiritual Babylon maintained her gloomy reign, in a manner, undisturbed. Yet Christ was not without a witness, and there is reason to believe that many of his jewels will be gathered from that period, and from those places where "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." In the valleys of Piedmont the voice of the gospel was at times heard; and the name of Raymond holds a dreadful immortality, from the atrocity of his crimes, and his cruelties inflicted on the followers of Christ.

The seeds of the reformation were sown previous to the days of Luther. Even from the times of the crusades a series of remarkable events began to loosen the fetters which bound the minds of men, and gradually to weaken the foundations of the papal edifice, founded in ignorance and superstition, and consolidated by ambition. It is a common remark, that one great man seldom appears alone. Luther, the greatest of Christian heroes since the apostolic age, was surrounded and aided by a constellation, for such I may call them, of men eminently fitted by Provi-

dence for the great work they were destined to accomplish. And while the flame broke out, and was rapidly spreading, in Germany, by a happy coincidence, a commotion was raised in England, though from causes apparently far less commendable, which was not composed but by the separation of that nation from the see of Rome.

The character and progress of the reformation derived many of its leading traits from the character and temper of the nations over which its happy influence prevailed. The thrones of Europe were, at that august moment, filled with greater monarchs than, all things considered, ever occupied them at any other period. In England, the eighth and greatest of the Henrys; in Germany and Spain, Charles the fifth; in France, Francis the First; and in Turkey, Solyman the Magnificent; while on the Papal throne sat Leo the Tenth, the most powerful and accomplished of all the popes, the Augustus of spiritual Rome, if that deserves to be called spiritual which was, in fact, more carnal, sensual, and devilish than the Rome of Augustus Cæsar. To the ambitious views and great resources of these monarchs, extraordinary as it may seem, was apparently owing the progress and establishment of the reformation. By these means, each one, fully occupied with his own projects and hopes of aggrandizement, was, in a manner, withdrawn from any hostile interference, till the work of God was accomplished by his own immediate instruments.

God, who is able to cause that a nation shall be born in a day, nevertheless usually accomplishes his great purposes gradually, and by the use of means. The gospel kingdom at first was ushered in by small and slow degrees. It was not to be expected, that the Reformation would either be complete and entire, or universal. Yet the wisdom of God was manifested in selecting Great Britain, a literary people, whose naval power was to give her a ready intercourse with all the globe; and Germany, a nation of a character peculiarly decided, persevering, grave, and self-consistent.

To draw the line of demarcation between the first reformers and the catholics, with any degree of exactness, would be difficult; perhaps the attempt would be hazardous. In general, the grand pillars of popery were torn away, the enormous load of

useless rites and ceremonies thrown off, the superstitions, corruptions, and abominable vices of their ecclesiastical polity rejected. But it was the infelicity of the first reformers, as it has been of their successors, that they differed and contended. Melancthon differed from Luther; Calvin from both; Carolstadt from all; and Erasmus, if he can be called a reformer, agreed with none of them, though he approved of many things they did. Combinations, however, and establishments soon took place; the Lutherans formed one, the Genevese another, the English a third, and the Scotch a fourth.

Some of these establishments rejected Episcopacy and a liturgy, while others retained both. I shall avoid either discussions or opinions on these points, relative to the exterior of the christian fabric. I think them not essentials of religion, and if pursued with a temper and spirit conformable to their professed intention, I hope those who may even err in these respects will nevertheless be accepted of God.

The grand pillars of the papal throne, and the enormous abuses running down through every grade of that most corrupt of all hierarchies, were visible and tangible to the reformers; they therefore united, at once, in their demolition and removal. But these were not the only objects which required the attention of the reformers. Errors in doctrine—errors which, like roots, had ramified into thousands of branches, spread wide, and crept far and deep, beneath a soil apparantly well cultivated, were still to be discovered and eradicated. In this work, the first grand reformers made less progress than in some other parts of their vast enterprise. The visible church had long been an apostate church, and at whatever period the completion of that apostacy may be fixed, the commencement of her decline may be traced to times still more remote.

The days of the celebrated Greek and Latin fathers were fruitful of errors, in doctrine and discipline, of stupendous growth; of which, if they could be estimated by weight or measure, enough might be selected from the flights and plunges of Origen alone to crush an elephant to the earth. The oriental philosophy had already mingled itself with, and claimed the sanction of, the doctrine of Christ. The belief that good and evil were self-existent and co-eternal, had swept off many into the deceitful

eddies of heathenism. And when Constantine ascended the throne, the Arian heresy threatened the virtual extinction of the christian church. Hence the remark of Turretin, that "the fathers are useful to us as *witnesses of fact*, but not as *judges of truth*," was, doubtless, correct.

In the dark ages, the follies and superstitions peculiar to the respective nations had more or less entrenched themselves within the precincts of christian doctrine. Astrology, with all its lumber of omens, dreams, influences, conceits, and superstitions, formed a huge portion of the piety and devotion of thousands; and logic, a wretched jargon of squibbles, sophisms, and riddles, supported by squadrons of anyalytics and dialytics, fed their understandings with wind.

To crown the whole, the philosophy and morality of Plato and Aristotle, though not understood, were lugged in and incorporated with their religion, and formed some of the main pillars of their faith. Hence arose *realists* and *nominalists*, together with the wise and profound doctrines of *substantial form:* concerning which, hosts of great men disputed for ages, with all the learning and subtlety the world could furnish, and with all the spleen, slander, and malevolence which priests, monks, bishops, and cardinals, could feel or inspire.

When the superstructure of Popery was torn down and destroyed, there still remained a great and vastly important reformation to be made in the opinions of men, which is still but partially accomplished. This change, though not related to objects vitally important to salvation, yet very materially affects many important doctrines of revelation, and many points of practical religion. Habits of incorrect thinking and false reasoning, sanctioned for ages by great names and whole nations, cannot be suddenly destroyed and done away. Neither are men like Luther and his coadjutors the men eventually to accomplish this work: it requires men of equal talents, boldness, and decision of character, but of a very different temperament of mind and turn of thinking.

Among the things left to be accomplished, after the reformation, and, doubtless, preparatory to another and far greater reformation still to come, I shall mention but three or four;

1. That the sights of man should be fully understood and established. I am grateful to a good Providence, which has place

me in a country where they are better *understood* and more fully *established*, than in any other country. Of all these rights, I shall, at this time, only speak of those of a religious nature, as they are the most sacred and important, and lie properly within the scope of this subject. Religious rights, involving the duty a man owes immediately to God, are by far the most necessary to be maintained and tolerated, while at the same time there is the least provocation to restrain them. But tyrants early learned the art of making religion an engine of state policy, or, in other words, of ambition; and thence sprung the oppressive doctrine of intoleration.

Nothing can be more surprising than that the reformers, whose first theme was the tyranny and usurpation of Rome, who had as yet but partially burst their chains, and were still in some places menaced with racks and flames, should, notwithstanding, be unable to perceive that religious freedom is the sacred and inviolable right of every man. Yet nothing is more certain than that they did not perceive it; but adopted many of the persecuting maxims of the former persecutors. Even the great Calvin, after whose name so many deem it an honour to be called, had not been taught by the smart of persecution to abhor the persecutor; neither had the tyrannical intolerance of Rome awakened in him the generous and liberal spirit of toleration.

I surely will not reject the truth, because Calvin held to it, but, at the same time, I confess, that a persecuting protestant, other things out of the question, stands lower on the list of persecutors, in my estimation, than any other; because they ought to know better; and, indeed, we read in such actions, rather the language of the heart than of the understanding and conscience. We can very easily apologise for them, and say it was the fault of the times; but it was no dictate of the spirit of Christ.

Since the reformation, the light of truth has shone, and the principles of religious toleration have, perhaps, made some progress in every part of Christendom, not even excepting Spain and Portugal. But, in our own happy country, they seem to have acquired their full maturity. While it is here perceived that there is no necessity of making religion an engine of state policy; while our rulers are not disposed to press religion into

the service of their ambition, so neither do our clergy hope to increase their power and influence, by blending the church and the state. Here it is, at length, fully discovered, that a man may worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and be nevertheless a useful member of civil society. How long it will be before this discovery shall be as entire and universal as it is now imperfect and limited, God only knows. But that the church of Christ will never recover her primitive order and purity till that is the case, is certain.

2. The reformers, while they had but a very imperfect knowledge of the rights of man, were equally unacquainted with the constitution and powers of the human mind. It was to the immortal honour of Locke, that he should lead the way, and enlighten mankind on both these subjects, very different in their nature, but equally important in their influence, yet intimately connected in the same subject. And it cannot be doubted, but that his skilful delineation of the human mind led him to those just and liberal views of religious freedom and toleration, with which he equally surprised, instructed, and delighted the most intelligent minds in Europe. Writers have succeeded Locke of more splendour and celebrity as philologists; and if they have corrected some mistakes, and supplied some deficiencies which escaped him, in his immense labours and unwearied researches, they have built on foundations immovably laid by him.

But another task remained; for, with whatever accuracy Locke and those that followed him delineated the intellectual powers of man, the dispute still remained unsettled, *whether the will of man were free*—a dispute which was truly important, as it involved many doctrines of religion and morality. This dispute, which had been carried on between papists and protestants now raged between predestinarians and Arminians; but was carried on in the dark, by men who did not understand each other's ground or weapons, or, in fact, their own.

This country claims the honour of giving birth to the man who put this grand question at rest. Jonathan Edwards, proceeding on the principles of Locke, as far as he went into the investigation of the mind, settled the doctrine of the human *will* as firmly and unanswerably as Locke had that of the *understanding*. Yet

so, in general, as to give neither side of the dispute the victory. But he silenced both parties, by demonstrating that they had both fundamentally mistaken the grand principles of the subject about which they contended. He showed, that as the will is not governed by a self-determining power, so neither is its freedom impaired by moral depravity. Several answers were attempted to this incomparable work; but some of them, it is said, were still-born, and so saved the credit of their authors: while one of Edwards's principal antagonists, as I have heard, died with vexation, because he came to the birth, and was not able to bring forth.

Edwards, with a force of reason and intellect, which it is believed by many was never surpassed in any human effort, having drawn the lines of this great subject, apparently concurrent with truth and experience when drawn, but which no one could trace till his pervading mind led the way, was able to perceive thereby the import and harmony of the doctrines of the gospel which relate to the corruption and depravity of human nature, and, in general, of all the doctrines of grace. He perceived that man's inability to comply with the gospel constitutes the very essence of his crime, being only of the *moral kind*, as already explained; that the provision of the gospel is general, and its offer universal.

From his view of the constitution and powers of the mind, he was able to understand and explain the doctrine of a *moral necessity*, under which man acts, harmonizing on the one hand with that of divine decrees, as taught by Calvin, and, on the other, with that of moral agency, which had never been so clearly explained and illustrated as by himself. Hence Dr. Hill, one of the ablest of the Scotch divines, and the author of the *Institutes*, says, that Jonathan Edwards may be styled *the "prince of the Calvinists."* Certain it is, that he did for them more than they could do for themselves, showing the decrees of God compatible with human liberty, and the doctrine of total depravity reconcilable with man's accountableness and guilt, because of a moral nature.

Edwards was followed in some of his leading opinions by Hopkins, and Bellamy, and West, and, eventually, by most of

the evangelical divines in the northeastern section of the union. His writings have been published and read in Great Britian; and many of their most distinguished writers and orthodox divines have adopted the general outline of his sentiments.

Neither the term *New Divinity*, by which this strain of sentiment is sometimes called, is appropriate, nor any more so is that of *Hopkinsianism*. The sentiments, generally called New Divinity, did not originate in this country, and were known in the church long before the days of Edwards or Hopkins. Milner, in his church history, asserts, that the doctrine of a limited atonement was not known in the ancient Christian church till the time of St. Augustine; nor is it admitted by all, that St. Augustine himself held that sentiment. Certain it is, that the greater part of protestants have held a general atonement. And through the writings of many of the ablest and most orthodox divines, the general strain of doctrine taught by Edwards, Hopkins, and Bellamy, are discoverable.

Why this system should be named after Hopkins, in preference to Edwards, is not easily accounted for, unless it were because it was feared the greatness and fame of Edwards would give too much weight and respectability to a scheme which was called after his name. Edwards was the great master spirit of his day, and, in theological truth, was the luminary of his country.

The day and the labours of Edwards, and the eminent men who followed in his steps, form a memorable era in the history of the church. This may be distinguished by the great and sudden increase of divine light and Christian knowledge attending their ministry. For the lapse of nearly a century, no part of the globe has experienced so many, and such remarkable revivals of religion, nor is there any country in the world where so large a proportion of the whole mass of the people are known to profess Christianity, attended with evidence of its sincerity. As these people have rapidly emigrated into every part of the United States, this evangelical work has followed them, and New-England has been the radiating centre whence reformations have spread to every part of the union. There certainly may be exceptions to this remark, but, as a general truth, it cannot be denied.

As it was with the grand Saxon reformer, so it was with Edwards: they neither of them proceeded so far into the minuter parts of reformation as some men who rose up after them; yet Edwards, though he travelled farther into the great fields of truth than any uninspired man, was not wholly occupied with speculation. Few men in our own country were ever made Christ's honoured instruments of turning more souls to righteousness.

The reformation of Luther bore a more direct and efficient relation to the demolition of the massy walls, the marble towers, and iron dungeons of Rome, than to the erection of the true gospel church. It was more general, embracing nations, courts, and princes, and less directed to the internal organization of Christ's church, in reference to purity of doctrine and discipline, than the reformation commenced by Edwards, and carried on by others coeval with, and subsequent to him. I repeat, and mention once for all, that I name Edwards, and his fellow labourers, not because he was first in the general strain of doctrine to which I allude. Many distinguished men, in various parts of Europe, even as early as Luther and Calvin, maintained as nearly the same ground as their imperfect notions of the human mind would admit.

But after the inquiries of Locke and Edwards had resulted in the discovery and delineation of men's intellectual and moral powers, the true intent of revelation concerning the great doctrines of divine decrees, human depravity, liberty, accountableness, and guilt, was better understood, and the grand and glorious work of the first reformers was carried forward farther towards its ultimate consummation.

I have dwelt long on this article, and have, in some degree, anticipated, though not in its express form, what I intended for the third.

3. A correct knowledge of the powers, faculties, and character of the subject, will be readily perceived to be essential to a just understanding of the nature of the government under which he is placed. Accordingly, neither the first reformers, nor their immediate followers, either entertained or conveyed any very correct notions of God's moral government over the world.

Except as far as related to the elect and church of God, it is very difficult to form any notion of what government they ima-

gine God exercises over the human race; or the ends he has in view by showing them temporal favours. None of his dealings with them can be corrective; they have no trial or probation. There is nothing intended for them in mercy; there is nothing designed ultimately for their amendment; they have no interest in reformers or reformations. I say again, no evasion or subterfuge can be so base, none so mean and barefaced, as the pretence that the non-elect are unknown. They are known to God, who is exercising an infinitely wise and gracious government over the world; and he deals with them as creatures whose character and destiny are fully known.

The non-elect, as many contend the reformers believed, and as some of them probably did believe, labour under an immutable condemnation, drawn upon them by the sin of Adam; and, beside this, a fatal and natural incapacity to obey God, and an eternal decree of reprobation. I then ask, what kind of government does God exercise over them?

The word of God settles this question, but on far different grounds, as to their condition.

It has been already remarked, that the doctrine of a propitiation for all men, and a general proclamation of grace, presents a far nobler outline of the plan of redemption than can arise from any view of a limited atonement. The same remark applies still more eminently to the idea of a mediatorial government exercised over all men. Were divine truth silent, the hand of Providence, dealing out innumerable blessings to all nations, shows them to be under the Mediator's reign. It cannot be denied that the comparative advantages of nations and ages greatly differ. Atonement and redemption are widely different in their nature and effects. The former sets open the door of mercy, the latter applies the benefits of Christ. Some nations, and some portions of mankind, have certainly been placed nearer the fountains of light and mercy, and others apparently more remote; but a God of infinite goodness reigns over all; a sovereign of almighty power, and mysterious in his ways, directs the eternal destinies of all. He is uncontrolled in his operations; he can work by means or without means; by means visible or invisible.

There is not an idea more incongruous to the condition of the

whole human family, to the spirit of the gospel, or to the express declarations of the word of God, than that man is not in a state of probation. If God commands all men everywhere to repent, if he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance ; if his long suffering and mercy are directed to that object, they must be in a state of trial preparatory to their everlasting and unalterable condition.

In relation to the divine government, with many of the reformers, there seemed to be but two predominating ideas, viz. *Grace* and *Fate;* whereas the Scriptures uniformly convey to us the notion of a *moral* government ; that the Supreme Ruler, full of mercy and compassion, having conferred great temporal blessings on his rebellious subjects ; having wrought out a propitiation for sin, by sending his son to die for the world, has issued a proclamation of pardon, and an offer of mercy ; not an insidious proclamation of pardon to all, when atonement was made for but a part, and, perhaps, but a very small part, if we regard the present and past time, and so made under the shallow and deceptive pretence, that the true elect are not known ; but a true and sincere offer of pardon to all, on the broad ground of a complete propitiation and boundless provision.

But it will be asked, " if election be admitted, what does it matter, after all, whether atonement be limited or general ?" To which I answer, it matters every thing : A general atonement renders a universal proclamation of pardon and reconciliation to God consistent ; it places fallen man in a state of probation ; sets open before him the door of mercy ; and, of course, shows us why, and to what end, favours are bestowed on the wicked fully accounts for the exhortations, warnings, persuasions, and threatenings, which are set before him ; or, as I said before, (and I think it worth repeating) there never was a greater, a more shameful, or ridiculous absurdity, than to say to a sinner, for whom Christ did not die, " If you do not believe in Christ you cannot be saved." While, on the other hand, election is fully compatible with a general atonement, and the universal invitations of the gospel. God's design to save a part of the human race, lays no bar in the way of the rest. If I send my boat and bring off five men from a wreck, and give the other

five an offer of coming also, and they refuse, they will have no excuse; they will deserve their fate. If they deserved it, in case my boat had not gone at all, for refusing my offer they deserve it doubly.

The decree of election is carried into effect, and the elect are saved, not merely because they were elected, but for the same reason for which they were elected. The same may be said of all the decrees of God. He is infinitely wise and unchangeable. His decrees I understand to be his previous and immutable determination to do every thing in the manner which would be best, or which his wisdom would approve, at the time of doing it, had there been no previous decree. If, therefore, he was, in fact, able to create, uphold, and govern a universe of intelligent creatures, in perfect consistency with their freedom, he was equally able to form a previous determination to do so. In short, whatever he can do, he can previously design to do; and whatever he has done, or will do, he did unalterable and eternally design to do. As much more liberty as can actually exist under an infinitely wise and powerful government, can, with equal ease, certainty, and equity, have been unalterably predetermined. The opposers of decrees seem never to have considered, that with a being of almighty power, wisdom and goodness, it is as easy to determine beforehand, as it is to do; and that the whole plan of divine government is not carried into effect, as I said, merely because decreed, but both its execution and decree rest immutably on the same basis, viz. the entire approbation of God as the best plan.

Yet, surprising as it may seem, some of our triangular preachers pretend to have found out that God's plan is not the best possible plan; and it offends them very much to hear any one assert that, of all possible plans, God's plan is the best; you might nearly as well tell them that all sin consists in selfishness. I think they must be far greater metaphysicians than Edwards. They must be as sharp-sighted as the companions of Poole, who saw the fiery dragon, "*cum cada retorta in circulo.*" Perhaps, they will draw their main argument from their ignorance, and rely upon saying, that they do not know but there may be a better plan. To this I shall only reply, that the material of this

argument is as plenty and abundant as it is useless. It is not "*ad ignorantiam*," but *ab ignorantia*.

I have noticed some articles in which the reformation fell short of that maturity to which it will one day certainly arrive; and have pointed out the obvious progress which has been made in those articles, in various sections of the church, and particularly in our own country. The people, at least of our own country, will not be backward to allow, that, in the great article of religious freedom and toleration, we are far in advance of every nation on earth. Why should it be thought incredible that we have made some progress in the great and exalted work of reformation? Is it less probable that Christ would favour his church in this country than in Europe, where the accumulated crimes of thousands of years swell the materials of national retribution to a vast amount?—Where national establishments and churches, slumber on the bosom of luxury, and repose in the golden dreams of ambition?

Why should the wrinkles of malice deepen, and the finger of scorn be pointed at the names of Edwards, and Hopkins, and Bellamy, and West, amd Emmons, when they and their fellow labourers have been made instrumental of turning many souls to righteousness; and have been more successful in religious reformations than any men now living on earth? And if that portion of the church has been favoured and honoured with a larger portion of the Holy Spirit than any other, does not this fact bear testimony to their doctrine? To the purity and spirituality, the life and power of their doctrine, can alone be ascribed the success which has attended their labours.

With feelings of regret, which I have no words to express, I am compelled to advert to the systematic, determined, persevering, and diversified efforts of a set of men, who have acquired influence, in this city, to subvert the doctrines, and destroy the influence and reputation of these reformers in the christian church. Their writings are accused of consisting of nothing but "verbiage, tautology, absurdity, arminianism, socinianism, atheism, nonsense," &c.* The reformation which

* See Dr. Samuel S. Smith, in his note on the cover of Ely's Poems.

they effected in doctrine and discipline, though thousands of souls, both on earth and in heaven, will remember it with eternal joy and triumph, is either altogether hissed into opprobrious silence, or loudly spoken of with contempt.

It is nothing to them, that to claim the birth of such a man as Jonathan Edwards, is an honour to a nation; that for vigour of intellect he can fall into no class beneath that of Newton and Aristotle. As to "verbiage," his writings, and those of many of his brethren, will be read with instruction and pleasure, when the vapid books of those who cast the reflection, written with moon-beams, and dictated by the night-mare, shall have perished in the rubbish, lumber, and rust of libraries.

There are two very cogent reasons why they do not answer the books of these tautologists; one is, because they never read them. This, of all suppositions, is the most charitable, after hearing their statements, so infinitely distant from the truth. Had they read the books they condemn, they must either hold a different language, or give up all pretence to veracity. The other is, that were they to read these books, and in those few instances where they have read them, they cannot answer them. Were they honest and candid, they would say, as Dr. Taylor said, after reading a small tract of Edwards, "I have been writing these thirty years, and this little book confutes it all."

But they have no notion of argument; they do not like that way of defence; it is too metaphysical. Their plan, both of defence and attack, is drawn from two sources; bold assertions, and gross ridicule. Yes, the great gun of the city has been fired so incessantly, charged with this kind of ammunition, that he is suspected by many to be breech-burnt. But he does not shoot bullets, of consequence nobody is killed. And, not only the great gun, for I love to talk figuratively, but field pieces, swivels, blunderbusses, muskets, carbines, pistols—even down to pop-guns, have fired in squadrons and battalions; and some, I believe, as small as the cannon made by an artist of the queen of Sweden, to shoot fleas and bed-bugs with, which is still kept as a curiosity in the Swedish museum. One of this last description it was, that fired off the "Constraat" already mentioned. But, luckily, he did not kill even a bug.

But the weapons of this controversy are not generally levelled at Edwards, Hopkins, &c., but against the teachers in this city, supposed to hold their sentiments. Unwearied efforts are made to dislodge them from their stations, and drive them out of the city. This is done by weakening their influence—representing their sentiments as horrible and dangerous—withdrawing from them the confidence of their hearers—treating them with coldness and contempt—disseminating dark surmises and uncertain rumours among the people, and endeavouring, as was said in another case,

"With ambiguous words to sound or taint integrity."

Besides, great exertions are made to fill all the neighbouring vacancies with ministers of their own stamp, and to prevent one of a different description from obtaining a settlement. In this they are greatly facilitated by a ministerial nursery, not far off, in which abundance of saplings are growing, nearly ready to set; and these they can prune and shape as they please.

But what is the motive of all this? Ah! here I must be cautious, for it is dangerous to inquire into the motives of great men. I have lived long enough to discover that a man's motives are generally as obvious as his conduct. And many men put me in mind of the ostrich, which, when pursued over the tropical sands, will run a while, and then hide his head in the sand, while his hind parts, to speak delicately, are all exposed; and you may come up and take him at pleasure. But these men hide nothing; their motives are perfectly obvious. But we may judge with still greater certainty, by considering who they are.

Some of them are foreigners, from the island of Great Britain; some are Dutch, &c.; and they certainly have their national prejudices to plead their excuse. They are men of considerable learning and talents; and had not this paltry national prejudice covered their minds with a kind of intellectual vellum, highly unfavourable to sharp sight or quick sensation, they would be very clever fellows. But this renders them, on certain occasions, quite numb and rigid. It is perfectly natural for them to spurn the idea of being instructed, or detected of errors, by

any thing indigenous to the new hemisphere. They did not come hither to receive, but to give instruction; "non ab allis corrigendi, sed alios corrigere."

Some of this description there are from New-England, who were once professed Hopkinsians—stars in the Zodiac—

"But, O, how fallen!—how changed!"

Of this number is the Queen of Sweden's little cannon, who, little as he is, is a sharp shooter. He it was, as I before said, that shot off the "Contrast." A disappointment in love, it is commonly reported, made him, at once, an anti-Hopkinsian and a poet. His poems were so lucky in the article of flattery, to certain great men he wished to please, that they effectually did his business for him; and I expect few have read them without feeling a strong propensity to do the same for themselves. There goes a pleasant story with regard to this man. It is said, after his total defection, wishing to convince a certain audience of the enormous errors of the Hopkinsians, he read them, as a specimen, one of his former sermons. I believe few will wonder that his audience should be struck with horror. His poems fully indicate his diappointment, as they abound in the well known

"Hair-brained, sentimental grace."

Not grace in Calvin's sense of the word, for neither his poems, Contrast, nor conduct, show much of that. But whether the Hopkinsians have reason to regret the cruelty of his mistress, or the lovers of poetry to rejoice in it, I leave for future consideration.

Perhaps these men will consider it as a matter of joy and exultation, that this city has, from the first, shared little in the great and frequent reformations prevailing to the north and east; nor do they consider, that the comparatively small number of professors of religion found in this city, would be still much smaller if restricted to those whose profession commenced in this city.

Confused, unsettled, and bewildered, like all great cities, with an immense heterogeneous mass of strangers, of no certain character, overwhelmed in business, dazzled with wealth and show, and occupied with every thing more than religion, yet willing to have enough of that to be fashionable here, and

go to heaven hereafter at some very distant day; this city has ever afforded a field of operation and influence for teachers of a complexion like its own; and they have not been wanting in sufficient numbers and activity. And they have prevailed thus far, at the dreadful expense of the eternal welfare of thousands of souls.

Their motive, for I will not shrink from the truth, in excluding the reformers and reformations, the doctrines and principles of New England is not at all of a religious or moral nature. The love of truth, as I said above, does not produce persecution, enmity, pride, ill will, disdain, overreaching, undermining, intrigue. They deceive the people of this city by assuming false and specious motives; and never was deception more exquisite, more profound, or imposition more gross and triumphant. Were they actuated by the love of truth and the fear of error, very different would be their aspect and behaviour. But it is the love of self, and the fear of a rival, that urges them on. It is ambition to acquire and maintain a poor, wretched, short-lived, pitiful, ghostly power and influence over men.

They feel little of the love of truth, or the love of God, or the love of men, in this unhallowed system of opposition and intrigue. The word of God out of the question, were they influenced by human authorities, they might blush for the course they are pursuing. The names of Fuller, and Hall, and Jay, and Ryland, are sufficient to show them, that the sentiments they oppose are not without the support of talents and eloquence beyond the Atlantic, in a comparison with which, I leave them to find a place for themselves, if they can.

It is not the love of truth by which they are led; they therefore know, and have studied well, the chequered part they are to act—the tortuous course they must pursue. They know in what companies to be all meekness, gentleness, condescension, and humility; so that a harmless, credulous soul, will compare one of them to John the beloved disciple, another to Moses the meek lawgiver. They know when and how to burn with devotion; to soar in flights of faith; to appropriate all the promises to themselves; to knock at the gates of heaven with violence, and boldly demand a seat near the filial throne. Ah!

says one, it is surely Daniel or Isaiah come from heaven; says another, it is a second Elijah in his fiery car; or, says a third, more like St. Paul wrapt in the third heavens.*

Would that I could stop here; but there is another part of this picture: and in the sight of heaven I will not shun to declare the whole truth. As far as I have gone, they very often hear from their flatterers:—they shall hear the rest from a better friend than a flatterer. They know when and how to change their dove-like plumage into scales, and their snowy fleece into brindled spots, and threatning fangs. There is but a little distance between a sigh and a hiss, or between a smile and a grin:—and once a hiss was succeeded by a stab. They know how to dart on their victim like a baselisk from the sand, or to reach him like a Scythian with an arrow from behind a hedge. A man engaged in his own concerns, unsuspecting and unprotected, is their favourite mark. And let the public know, as there is one man who dares to say what he knows, that I have not made one of these assertions without a correspondent fact in my eye.

The people of this city are entitled to know the grounds of this whole business; they ought to know it, and they shall know it, if they will read. The men in this city who hold to what is usually styled New-England sentiments, have entered into no dispute with any one. They have with all possible endeavors cultivated the friendship and esteem of those who differed from them. They have even generally avoided entering on disputed points, in their own churches, that they might avoid all appearance of controversy. What has been the consequence? They have been attacked with great virulence and hostility, and in a manner, in short, which justifies every thing which has been said in these numbers.

But they are accused of great errors. What are their errors? Why, they hold to a general atonement. So does a great portion of the protestant church. The sentiment is clearly taught in the scriptures. They cannot even show that Calvin himself held differently. Most of the standard writers since the reformation hold the same.—Well—they deny original sin. This is not true. They deny imputation of guilt and a transfer of character; and

* One of them has been denominated the St. Paul of America.

so did Calvin. And if any one will examine the opinion of the reformers, together with their confessions of faith, he will perceive the doctrine of imputation by no means prevalent or general among them. They held to the original and entire corruption of human nature, by the fall, and so do we.

In a word, the preceding remarks apply with equal force also to the doctrine of depravity. But, why is all this uproar? A majority of the Synod of New-York and New-Jersy are full in the sentiments I have advanced. And will these people unchurch the Synod, and turn them out of doors? The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church may be nearly equally divided; though, in that body, the number in favour of what I consider correct sentiments is rapidly increasing.

In a general survey of the protestant church in America, these men cannot pretend to a majority. But having acquired a little influence in this city, their arrogance and presumption seem inclined to leap over all bounds. Were they inclined to fair and open controvesy, they would be answered to their satisfaction; but they desire no such thing. Their plan and their hope is by manœuvring, by secret working behind the curtain, by art and intrigue, to undermine the reputation of the men who hold to the sentiments which prevail in New-England, and drive them from the city.

The question is, whether they will succeed. All triumph, short of the triumph of truth and righteousness, is as short-lived as it is impotent and vain. There was a day when the parasites of Hildebrand adored him as the vicegerant of Christ, and as the Lord of men's consciences. We may turn to the page of history, which represents him parading through the streets of Rome like a blazing star; the triple diadem sparkling on his head, and the imperial purple floating from his shoulders. The thrones of Europe shook when he frowned; and monarchs were obsequious to his powerful mandate. There, one would be ready to say, was solid food for ambition; there was an object worthy of toil and intrigue. But he vanished like a dream! Ages have rolled away since he went to his final audit, before that God who respects not the persons of princes.

"I saw the wealthy wicked boast,
"Till at thy frown he fell;
"His honours in a dream are lost,
"And he awakes in hell."

Is there a menial slave, of piety and virtue, who followed at a distance the chariot of Gregory the Seventh, whose character and destiny any christian would not prefer to that of this spiritual tyrant?

The worst that can befal an ambitious spirit, is to succeed in his utmost plans and wishes. But, whether he fail or succeed, he is more an object of pity than resentment. And from my soul I pity these busy men, the very vital principle of whose scheme is selfishness and ambition; for, could they achieve what they aim at, it is but the tinsel of power, spread thinner than ever the gold beater spread his leaf; could they gain all they seek for, and for which they dig, and climb, and creep, and whisper, and trim; for which they have in store a thousand smiles, and frowns, and sighs, and hisses, and winks, and nods, and flatteries, and threats, it would all evaporate in a few blasts of applause, not made of the purest breath; it would perish

"Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
"And leave not a wreck behind."

But, should it be seriously asked what evidence there is that ambition is at the bottom of this conduct; I reply, that this, and this only, is sufficient to account for what they do; God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. The whole conduct of these men is such as might be expected from an ambitious man, labouring to supplant his rival and enemy. They show no love nor condescension—no meekness nor humility—no openness nor magnanimity. If you condescend, they vapour—if you resist, they are enraged—if you retreat, they pursue—and if you submit, they triumph.

Ambition, always vain, was never vainer than in this case. What if they triumph? There is not the splended charriot, the triumphal arch, the adoring millions; there is not the crown of Hildebrand, heavy with gold and gems—his splendid throne and

imperial robes, in expectance. Nor does this base contention portend a crown in heaven, or celestial robes of light and glory.

The sincere friend of truth may humbly repose his confidence in the God of truth, though his foes are numerous, strong, and active. And I place full confidence in the belief, that correct sentiments will prevail—that they will not be rooted out of this city. Neither the pitchy, midnight cloud of the eleventh, nor the early dawn of the sixteenth century are to return; nor are the discoverers and improvers of the eighteenth century to be compelled, like Gallileo and Copernicus, to retract their discoveries, in order that the champions of selfishness may rule the church a little longer. Civil rulers have learned that they can make shift to wield the sword and sceptre, and are in no dread of a peal of thunder from the Vatican; nor are they in need of monks and inquisitors at their elbow, to point out the victims of the mother of harlots. The amusements of the *auto-de-fe* are past; and, as for the ghostly lords and umpires of conscience, they are never more to return. The faithful witnesses of truth are no more dragged to the anvil, that their chains and fetters may be made fast; nor are these moral blacksmiths longer to rivet their fetters on the mind, made for free and liberal discussion.

But, defeated as Satan and his angels, and all his legions of spiritual despots, emissaries, and abettors are—dislodged from their main fortresses—driven from the open field, and ferreted from glens, coverts, and fastnesses, it is astonishing to see the activity, the incredible zeal, boldness, and desperation of their expiring efforts. They can no more endure the light than ghosts and goblins can abide the approach of morning; it discloses their frightful features, and pierces them through with intolerable pain. Yet, in their ardour to maintain even a hair-breath of ground, or perhaps to bring off the body of Patroclus, or some hero slain, they forget that they can do nothing but in darkness, and bolt fairly out into open day. What do we see?—Their whole panoply!—You might nearly take their description from Ossian's cloudy ghost: "Their sword is a pale meteor, without edge or point—their spear is mist"—their

breastplate made of something which shines in the night like burning gold,* now appears a miserable patch of rotton wood. Their helmet is paper, whose only virtue is derived from some great name, such as CALVIN, written on it in capitals. Yet their countenance is very fierce, and smoke issues from their mouth and nostrils. Did you not see their weapons, you might expect a terrible conflict; and, as it is, they will make a stout resistance to every thing but "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

I fully anticipate all that will be said of these remarks; the contemptuous slang of Arminianism! Socinianism! Ribaldry! Slander! that will be thrown out. But, that reason which renders man the lord of this terrestrial globe, and which continually strives to rescue him from the reign of his passions and prejudices, if allowed to speak, will show the reader that my premises are true; and, as for the conclusions, I wait for time and experience, those grand correctors of folly, to justify them. That tribunal before which I am perfectly certain this production will fare the best, will be the consciences of the very men I accuse; for they well know I speak the truth. Were they, indeed, as ardently engaged in promoting truth, as they are error; in removing old prejudices, as they are in supporting them; in promoting the spread of light and reformation, as they are in extinguishing the one, and resisting the other, still using the means to do it which they are using, they would have reason to be ashamed of their conduct, and would merit the disapprobation of all men; for the end cannot sanctify the means.

The cause of Jesus Christ, important and glorious in its nature, divine in its origin, and pure in its principles, uniform and resistless in its progress, and secure of its final issue, asks no assistance from those artifices by which the schemes of ambition are accomplished, much less does it fear those artifices, or the more bold attacks of wicked men. And it will progress and prosper; neither shall the gates of hell prevail against it. Let these men continue to plot and whisper; let them summon to their aid their sharpest satire and best logic—their boldest assertions, and most pious tones, still their scheme is not on the ground of truth, and

* Foxfire.

it will not stand. After having wasted their wit on phantoms of their own creation, their zeal in vain efforts, and all their mighty resources in building castles in the air, they must at last bow to the truth in those solemn scenes, where the illusions of ambition are not known, and where the adorations of a multitude, led on by sophistry and intrigue, can no longer give countenance.

INVESTIGATOR.

TO

THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK.

I HAD almost concluded to issue this Triangle, which the reader will perceive is the true and real Triangle, without any *address*, *advertisement*, *ad lectorem*, or *preface;* but I feared it would resemble a door without a threshold, or a building without a courtyard or portico. It is not worth while for a writer to say much about his motives in his preface. It would be like a man who was conducting you into a Museum, who should stop you at the door to tell you what was to be seen: it would be quicker work to let you in. And Johnson's saying, that a book will fix its own age and country, is generally true.

This book is not a "*Habeas corpus ad respondendum,*" but rather a *Habebunt corpora ad vivendum.* I fear the lawyers will not comprehend this phrase, but the divines will, "*and that will do,*" as the great Wellington said when he laid his hands on the pommel of his saddle. The Hopkinsians are a very clever set of men; all they want is to live, and "let live." They are disinterestedly benevolent. They wish people to know the truth, merely for the truth's sake. They, to be sure, do not wish all their necks to be made into one, and that put at the

option of Nero. A Dey of Algiers once put the Spanish Ambassador into a great mortar, and shot him away at the Spanish fleet. Now, no man likes to be sent out of a city in this style. I use these little metaphors to convey my ideas: nobody believes that we have a Nero or the Dey of Algiers to contend with; but we perceive they aim at *thorough work*, and that in a summary way; we must, therefore, do a little—hence the TRIANGLE.

I.

THE TRIANGLE.

SECOND SERIES.

No. I.

I FEEL a concious pleasure in addressing the people of this noble and flourishing city—the first in the New World, and the fairest on the globe. And let it not be understood that I consider myself as environed with cross-eyed selfishness; as immured in a region of gloomy prejudice; as condemned to wear the galling chains forged by iron-hearted intolerance, and riveted by the hand of sturdy ignorance. Of these imperious and unsightly demons I feel no fear; yet I revere and admire the varied talents I see conspicuous in every profession and calling, in every art and science, both liberal and mechanical—

"Where Liberty dwells, there is my country."

There is not wanting liberality of sentiment, magnanimity of character; nor is this city wanting in its portion—nor is it a scanted and measured portion of intellect, adorned with the beauty of virtue, enlightened with the glory of benevolence, and fairly loosened from the gordian knot of interest and selfish consideration. And I rejoice to say, that many whose theory allows them but a cable's length of range, are, nevertheless, in heart and practice, floating at large on the main ocean of real benevolence.

Else why do I see these asylums for the sons and daughters of affliction—these grand and extensive hospitals, alms-houses, and receptacles for every class of the wretched from the keen and blighting storm of misfortune, whose extended and lofty walls might vie with the palace of a monarch? whose numerous apartments, and ample provisions, seem to promise repose and comfort to all that need? Else why do I see long ranks of poor children, of helpless orphans, enfilading the streets, to be instructed on the sabbath; and that by gentlemen, and even ladies, of rank and fortune, whose only remuneration is the pleasing consciousness of benefiting such as, by their tender and helpless years, can have no knowledge of the extent of the benefit intended?

There is a nobleness of soul, a grandeur of sentiment, a disinterestedness of heart, which soars as far above all consideration of self as the heavens are above the earth. An hour's enjoyment of that sublime pleasure is worth more than a Roman triumph—more than all the years through which ambition toils and climbs, even though it gain the summit. There is such a thing as doing good for the sake of the pleasure it brings; and he who knows not what that means is a stranger to pleasure. Let me here, for the sake of those who have never read it, repeat the story of Carazan; and which, though I cannot reach the style of its author, and may give it but imperfectly, (having no book before me,) may furnish a useful lesson to some who may read it.

Carazan was the richest merchant in Bagdat, with no children or dependants; his expenses had been small, and, with a prosperous run of busines in the silk and diamond trade of India for many years, he had amassed immense treasures. He met with no losses, his caravans were expeditious, traded with success, and returned in safety. One enterprise made way for another; every successive project was formed on a greater scale, and all were terminated with success. Business was swayed by his influence; merchants depended on his will; nobles and princes envied his magnificence, and even the caliph feared his power.

But Carazan lived only for himself. His maxim was never to move but with a prospect of advantage. He never gave to the poor; he never listened to the cries of distress; calls on his beneficence were repelled with a frown, and the poor had long learned to shun his dwelling.

But the city was suddenly surprised with a great change in his conduct. He removed to a principal square, in the centre of the city, and made proclamation to all the poor to resort to his palace. They flocked together by hundreds, and by thousands; and what was their surprise to find his halls set out with tables loaded with provisions; and such things as were most needed were dispersed in his porches and courtyards, and in the adjoining streets. People of all ranks were astonished, but could form no estimate of the motive of all this liberality and profusion.

On the second day Carazan made his appearance, and mounting a scaffold, raised for the purpose, he beckoned with his hand, and the murmer of applause and admiration suddenly ceased.

"People of Bagdat," said he, "I have hitherto lived to myself, henceforth I intend to live for the good of others. Listen attentively to the cause of the change you see. As I was sitting in my counting room, and meditating on future schemes of accumulating more wealth, I fell asleep; immediately I saw the angel of death approaching me like a whirlwind, and, ere I had time for recollection, he struck me with his dart. My soul instantly forsook my body, and I found myself at the bar of the Almighty. A dreadful voice from the judgment seat addressed me thus; 'You have lived entirely for yourself; you have done no good to others, and, for your punishment, God ordains that you be eternally banished from all society.' By a resistless power I felt myself driven from the throne, and carried, with inconceivable swiftness, through the heavens. Suns and systems passed me, and in a moment I was on the borders of creation. The shadows of boundless vacuity began to frown and deepen before a dreadful region of eternal silence, solitude, and darkness. In another moment the faintest ray of creation expired, and I was lost for ever.

"I stretched out my hands towards the regions of existence, and implored the Lord of creation to change my punishment if it were but to the torments of the damned, that I might escape that frightful solitude; but my horror was too dreadful for a moment's endurance and I awoke. I adore the goodness of the great Father who has thus taught me the value of society, while he allows me time to taste the pleasures of doing good."

I am not about to improve this story by recommending it to my reader to dream for the sake of reformation. Indeed, I would hope there are no Carazans in the city; and yet I cannot but fear there are some to whom so pungent a dream would be very useful. Dreams will come when they will, and I am not certain I shall not have a paroxysm of dreaming before I get through these numbers. But there is a mode of gaining information at the option of every person, and that I am about to recommend—I mean *reading*. Every person, it is well known, has not leisure for general reading, but every person can read enough to answer the purpose of the present recommendation. The unhappy prejudice subsisting in this city against New-England sentiments would infallibly yield, and be completely dissipated by a proper acquaintance with the books in which those sentiments are contained. These prejudices have not been planted so deep, and cherished with such vigour, by the perusal of books, but by deriving an account of their books and tenets through a medium which has given them a stain foreign to their nature. It has been done by perversion.

True, indeed, a mind already prepossessed, and strongly opinionated in error, may not be convinced by reading a book wherein the truth is stated. But even this will not hold good as a general rule, and in application to great bodies of people. The public mind, depraved as men are, will, generally, soon get right where the proper means of information are afforded.

I earnestly recommend to the people of the city to direct their attention to some of the books I shall hereafter name. They may rest assured that, even provided they should begin to read them with prejudice and disgust, they will end with pleasure and conviction; will rise up from the perusal acknow-

ledging themselves instructed and cured of their antipathy. They may be assured that those persons whom they hear daily condemning those writings, have never read them. They are imposed upon in this business, and their credulity is shamefully abused. They are exactly like the man I have heard of within a day or two, who was strongly condemning the Triangle, and a person present asked him if he had read it; he said no, but had his account from Mr. Honeygall: well, but had Mr. Honeygall read it? Why no, he had not read it, because he would not read so huge a thing; it would be wicked to read it. (Aside.) He never reads any thing.

So, reader, it is just as wicked for these sage censors of books to read the New-England books; and my word for it, they have not that sin to answer for. I ask the great and learned Dr. Buckram, (not that there is any such man in reality, I only use that name in a kind of allegorical or metaphysical sense;) I ask him whether he has ever read "Edwards on the Will?" Ha! he must think of it.

I must here let the good people into a secret of us bookmen which, perhaps, they don't know. It is the practice of some great readers, when they have read the title of a book and its contents, and cut into a paragraph here and there, to say they have read it; nor do they think it lying. Some, I believe, venture so far as to say they have read a book, when they have only read the letters on the back side: but that is going too far: I never do that.

A powerful appeal lies from this subject to the patriotic feelings of every American. Were any of us in France or England, and should hear them commending the writers of our own country, we should feel a secret gratification arising from our national attachment; we should feel it an honour done to ourselves; and so it would be. We feel a pleasure in hearing the greatness of Washington, the talents of Franklin and Rittenhouse, extolled. Every American is gratified at hearing the eloquent Chatham declare, in the British parliament, the American Congress to be one of the noblest bodies of men ever as-

sembled.* We are not backward to assert the equality, if not the ascendency, of our naval and military character. We boast of our inventions in the arts—of our success in manufactures.

And with such varied excellence of talent, would it not be extraordinary if, in the theological department, something important and respectable had not been achieved? The fame of exhibiting to the world the first perfect experiment of religious freedom and toleration cannot be denied us; and Europe herself has enrolled and immortalized the name of our first theological writer. Is the thought incredible that such a man as Edwards should kindle the genius and rouse the talents of his countrymen? He did it; and has been followed by a constellation of divines and writers on theology, to whom, if the immaturity of our seminaries denied the most perfect clasical excellence, nature had not denied intellectual powers of the first order, and posterity will not deny the honour of the first grade of usefulness and importance in their profession.

The perusal of their writings, by the people of this city, will be attended with several good effects which I shall particularly distinguish.

1. It will diminish, if not exterminate, their prejudices against *New Divinity*. For they will be surprised to find their great and leading doctrines, such as a general atonement, &c., to be the same as taught by the ablest and most orthodox divines since the reformation. The notion of moral inability was never a fabrication of the New-England divines; they will find, in the clearest and best writers of England, the same idea.

2. They will find themselves instructed and pleased. Books and Essays written, and Sermons delivered, in places where the work of God is carried on, cannot but derive an unction, a life and spirit, from the occasions that gave them birth. As the face of Moses shone when he descended from Sinai's glorious vision, so men greatly employed and honoured in the work of God, will transfuse through their writings the spirit of that work.

* At the commencement of the revolution.

It is a mournful fact, and will one day be as deeply deplored by those who have done it, as by those against whom it has been done, that the standard of opposition against those men and their writings should be lifted in New-York: that this highly-favoured city should be made the opposing bulwark—the breastwork of opposition. I rejoice to think that such walls as men build are not high, nor their foundations deep. I have no fear for the ultimate success of truth; but I fear for those who are opposing its progress—especially for those who are held in darkness by the craft and ambition of others. The chariot of salvation will not be impeded; it is guided by one who can save and can destroy.

It shall be the object of this Number to state to the good people of this city, and of the country and nation, wherever these presents shall come, what *documents*, and *books*, and *writings*—in short, what resources may be resorted to, in order to discover what those sentiments are which are falsely called *new divinity*, and, very unappropriately, *Hopkinsianism*. To this I now solicit the reader's attention.

Jonathan Edwards, I have elsewhere said, was the great master spirit of his day. Perhaps no man ever evinced more capaciousness of understanding and strength of intellect than he. This is the opinion of very competent judges, and probably will not be denied. His writings are numerous, among which his Inquiry concerning the Will was his greatest production, and may be considered as forming the basis of the distinguishing tenets of New-England divinity, as far as it contains any distinctive features. Of this I have spoken in the former series. After this, his work on Religious Affections may perhaps be next in point of importance. Had this been the only book he published, it would have rendered his name immortal. On this ground, explored by thousands of writers, he was often original, generally interesting, and always unanswerable. His History of Redemption, a work left immature, was sufficient to show the force and splendour of his talents. Various other important works were also published by him, which brevity forbids me to enumerate; but his numerous sermons, as many of them were delivered in periods of religous revival, and were more bleassed

as instrumental to that great work, if we except Whitefield's, than any ever delivered in this country, are without all parallel among American sermons; and for depth of thought, force of argument, and brilliance of imagination; for a magestic display of truth, solemnity of address, and power to arrest the conscience, they have never been surpassed. He had the rare talent of uniting metaphysical discussion with practical and experimental truth; of appealing with equal force and propriety to the understanding and to the passions.

The style of Edwards is plain and simple, and evinces to the judicious reader the progress of a gigantic mind moving through fields of truth careless of the artificial adjustment and fastidious polish of diction. That inelegancies may be discovered in his style, I certainly will not deny. But when those who dare accuse him of "verbiage" can show equal vigour of intellect, let them boast. When those who dare censure his preaching as unprofitable can show equal trophies of success, let them triumph.

Far be it from me to say that Edwards was correct in all his sentiments, a felicity which rarely falls to the lot of a voluminous writer. Even Calvin was not correct in every thing. Neither do I pretend or wish to say that he agreed in every point with those who since his day are denominated Hopkinsians. But I will say to every reader, if he will read Edwards on the Will —on Religious Affections—on Redemption—on God's Last End in the Creation of the World—on Moral Virtue—on Revivals of Religion—and various points discussed in his sermons, he will have before him some *books* and some *documents* whereby to judge of Hopkinsian tenets.

Samuel Hopkins, whose dreaded and execrated name is so often pronounced with strange horror by thousands of people who never read a page of his writings, so often held up to censure and obloquy by an equal number of men who boast of having read his works, but are equally ignorant of what they contain—Samuel Hopkins wrote and published a Body of Divinity. I shall here say little of this work; it is sold in several bookstores, and is in many libraries of this city. I may safely say, however, that it is one of the noblest bodies of divinity in

the English language; and I will venture to predict that it will stand as high on the the shelves of future libraries, and be regarded as a work of as much utility and merit, as Pictete, Ridgely, and Turretin, when the ignorant and maniacal rage against Hopkinsianism shall have subsided; and especially when it shall have the good fortune to be judged by those who have read it.

With regard to the leading sentiments of Hopkins, they do not differ materially from the most approved and orthodox divines, and the most eminent and standard writers since the reformation. Hopkins surely did not agree with them in every point, nor did any two important writers, that ever wrote, agree in all points. Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Beza, Zuinglius, Bucer, Carolstadt, all differed from each other; nor less did Baxter, Flavel, Owen, Watts, Doddridge, &c. differ. With reverence be it spoken, even Mason, Ely, Romeyn, and Milldoler, do not agree in all points.

Beside a body of divinity, Hopkins wrote various tracts and sermons, in all of which the grand and fundamental truths of religion are judiciously and ably handled. As a faithful minister of Christ, a public teacher, and an elementary writer on theological and moral subjects, the American church has had few more useful or more distinguished men. His style is plain, unornamented, and simple; with less strength and originality of conception than Edwards, his style verged nearer towards neatness and precision. In reading his pages you do not perceive inanity of mind carefully concealed by an elaborate texture of smooth and spider's-web phrases; nor an eternal and dead level of common places solemnly trimmed with insipid pomp, and the soporific monotony of easy periods, rounded as regularly as a thousand rolls of gingerbread. He wrote like a man of sense, who dared to think for himself, like a man of thought, who was master of his subject; like a man of piety, who regarded the truth; and if sometimes he justifies the suspicion of affecting to trace new paths, to launch into new speculations, show me the writer of eminence who is not more or less susceptible of that kind of ambition, or whose powers of mind rendered similar endeavours more successful, and, of course, more warrantable.

After Edwards and Hopkins, Bellamy may next be noticed as a writer of the same order, or school, if you please. His principal work is True Religion Delineated. Though this book is doubtless not received as a piece of divine inspiration, yet it is considered by many as a standard work: and such it ought to be, and will be considered, where true religion is understood, and where the reign of prejudice is not completely established. After this, his Dialogues on Theron and Aspasio, and The Glory of the Gospel, are works of high and distinguished merit.

Beside these, Bellamy published various tracts and sermons, much in the same strain of sentiment; and though certainly not to be admired as models of style and composition, they are on a level with the writings of the most pious and orthodox divines. Few ministers of the gospel were more able, faithful, or successful, in the day in which he lived, or since his time; or more honoured by Christ as the visible instrument of turning many to righteousness.

Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the son of the President, who was himself also President of Union College, did honour to his country; and if it was not to be expected that one nation should produce more than one man equal to his father; if it was impossible for him to raise, yet he sustained the name, by the vigour and acuteness of his literary productions. What he seemed to want in greatness and extent of understanding he made up by sagacity of judgment and acuteness of reasoning; and I shall scarcely be contradicted when I say, that in penetration and force of intellect he has rarely been surpassed.

His publications on the Atonement, and against Dr. Chauncy, have afforded to his adversaries the most unpleasant specimens and proofs of his reasoning powers.

Edwards, Hopkins, and Bellamy, have long since retired from their stations in the church militant, and, I trust, are now reaping the fruits of their labours in the mansions of joy and rest, together with many souls, the seals of their ministry on earth. And it is matter of consolation, to reflect that the idle clamours and reproaches which envy, pride, and ambition, are incessantly venting against these men and their doctrine, cannot pollute

the air, nor disturb the repose of those peaceful mansions. And if their persecutors and opposers would, for once, institute a just comparison between the tokens of divine approbation bestowed on the labours of these men, and on their own, it would give a chill to their ambition—would rebuke their pride, and change the voice of vituperation into confession and self-reproach.

Beside the writings of these men already enumerated, there are many writers of the same class now living, which circumstance ought, perhaps, rather to impose silence.

Their theological magazines, religious tracts, and periodical publications, the work of associations of ministers of that description, in which all their sentiments are abundantly disclosed, are immensely numerous. Sermons, however, form the principal department of their writings; and although it cannot be denied that they have published sermons which in point of execution are but ordinary, and perhaps sometimes incorrect in sentiment, yet they have also published sermons which, in defiance, of the overwhelming charge of "verbiage, tautology, and nonsense," will assume and maintain their station in the first class of that order of composition.

If Emmons has been charged with some peculiarities of sentiment, it should be remembered that those peculiarities are not chargeable on him as a Hopkinsian, but as a writer. I say this for the man of sense and candour who may read these pages. As for the bigot, blind with prejudice, and mad with intolerance, and who, like the countryman in Boston, would be liable to mistake the stuffed skin of a quadruped for the charter of Massachusetts, I leave him to hug his prejudices. Any peculiar notions entertained by Emmons, are no more chargeable to Hopkinsianism, than the peculiar notions and reveries of Stubner, or Blandrata, were chargeable to the doctrines of the Reformation. Stubner was among the reformers, and so is Emmons among the Hopkinsians.

I shall not pronounce on the peculiar opinions of Emmons. Whether they are correct or not, I leave to the decisions of that day which shall rectify every error, and bring truth to light. But they are surely not of a nature which ought to interfere with christian fellowship and communion. But Emmons, re-

garded as a sermonizer, is surpassed by few writers of that class, either living or dead; and few sermons, considered in all respects, are superior to his. His subjects, generally important, are judiciously selected, and skilfully raised out of an appropriate text. His sermons are read with ease and pleasure: with pleasure, because his object is perfectly obvious, his conceptions clear, and his arrangement natural and luminous; and with ease, because short, and always rapidly progressing.

"Semper festinat ad eventum."

Emmons is an original of the noblest class, and certainly one of the most decided character. No candid reader, who reads for instruction, is disappointed, or rises from the perusal of one of his sermons without some benefit. His sermons generally indicate extensive knowledge and acuteness of judgment. His style is neat, appropriate, pure, and correct, though less elegant and splendid than that of Hall, and less easy and graceful, perhaps, than that of Jay. In fervency and pathos, we may have some in our own country who excel him; and his sermons are, perhaps, too didactic—too much the essay, and not sufficiently the popular address, to answer, in the best manner, all the ends of preaching. With less of the flowers of May, or fruits of October, than some others, his sermons may be compared to the meridian hour of a clear day in June, when the sun puts forth his strength, the summer displays her maturity, and vegetation all her energy. I say nothing of any uncommon turn to a passage of scripture he may give—of any new distinction, or modification, in a point of speculation; for we live in a day when disputes between Monothelites and Monophisites, Realists and Nominalists, no longer terminate on the rack or gibbet; when wars between Troglodytes and Brobdinagoreans no more lay waste cities; nor are the differences of Bigendians and Littlendians to be considered as heresies.

The reader of Emmons' Sermons is like one passing over an extensive and well-cultivated farm; the fences are substantial and erect; the fields are verdant, square, and regular, not *Triangular;* the meadows are separated from the woodlands,

and the pastures from the tillage: the mansion-house is not lofty, but neat and spacious, and speaks itself the seat of wealth, but not of dissipation—of happiness, but not of ambition. The prospects are diversified with hills and valleys, and enriched with springs and rivulets.

The audiences who heard Emmons have heard more truth, and are better instructed, waving all peculiar and discriminating points, than those who heard Davies, or Weatherspoon; and trusting that time will cure prejudices, and assured that selfishness will soon yield the ground to a benevolence *purely disinterested*, I frankly declare, that I would as lieve be thought the writer of the sermons of Emmons, as of Watts or Baxter, Hall or Fuller, Sherlock or Tillotson, Saurin or Claude, Bossuet or Bourdaloue.

After the critic has screwed up his nose, scowled, hissed, snuffed, tossed, and pronounced a few such phrases as "ignorance!—no taste!—impudence!" and the like; I would request him to read a sermon of Davies, of Saurin, of Baxter, of Sherlock, of Massilon, and of Emmons; and then ask himself which of them conveys the most important truth, with fewest words, most simplicity and force, least affectation and labour, and greatest clearness. I must caution him, however, to break fairly through the blinding halo that surrounds great names; to be on his guard against the splendour of the great assemblies of London and Paris, where nobles and monarchs worship; to fortify his auditory nevres against the titillation of pompous phrases, and majestic circumlocution, which add little to the force, beauty, or impression of truth. A sermon is not the greater, because a monarch heard it, nor the better, because he admired it.

A sermon is, or ought to be, a portion of the gospel of Christ adapted to the attention of a public audience: its style and manner may be compared to the vessels on which a public feast is served up. Important truth is the food itself. Now, the service of dishes may be of gold, silver, porcelain, or common earthen ware, pewter, or even wood. Some forty years ago, when the good people of this country used to eat on wooden trenchers, even a pewter service was thought quite splendid and luxurious. Emmons treats his audience in a handsome service of

silver; and if there are those who can go as high as gold, enriched with diamonds, I am glad. Let it be remembered, however, that very indifferent food may be served up in gold, and many a deadly draught has lurked in a golden goblet.

The pious and venerable West, "whose praise is in all the churches" where he is known, and whose full value cannot be known, but by personal acquaintance, now more than eighty years of age, is still discharging the duties of the sacred office. Three times has his congregation heard him pass through the New Testament, expounding verse by verse the sacred oracles; illustrating and enforcing them with a propriety, acuteness, and vigour, of which this country has seen no parallel: nor has any minister of the present day a happier talent in that most useful branch of public instruction, or is "mightier in the scriptures." Dr. West's publications have not been numerous; but what few things he published, will be sufficient to perpetuate his name with honour. His treatises on moral agency, and on the atonement, will best show their force in an attempt to answer them. With that inattention to the ornaments of style characteristic of his early time, he evinced great vigour of thought, and justness of reasoning.

Christ has honoured this worthy man in an extraordinary manner: for the space, I believe, of sixty years, in which he has discharged without a stain, the work of the ministry, he has from time to time seen the work of God carried on amongst his people; and very many souls have been given him as seals of his ministry, who will be stars in the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

Though I would willingly dispense with mentioning the names of persons living, from delicacy to their feelings, yet that silence, any further than is imposed by brevity, cannot comport with the design of this enumeration, which is to show how remote from candour and truth are those reflections and sneers, which deny to New-England the name of writer or theologian. And I feel it my duty to ask many young men of education and talents, but recently from that quarter, who have established themselves in this city in the various branches of business; I

ask them, whether it gives them pleasure to hear such reflections,

"Tossed in the jest from wind to wind?"

I ask them, whether they have become so triangular—so sealed with prejudice, as really to believe, there are no writers there?

They peradventure may have heard of the name of Dwight, the maternal grandson of the great Edwards; perhaps they may have been educated under his eye and instruction, and, if so, they have heard his course of theological lectures: shall I believe, that since they have come within the radiance of superior luminaries, that they are truly converted to the belief, that there is *nothing in New-England*—that all there is "verbiage, tautology, and nonsense"—"no books, no documents, no writings?" Some of them I know to be sons of New-England clergymen of eminence and distinction. But here, alas! they have learned the humiliating fact, that their fathers knew nothing, and were nothing; or, if any thing, in comparison as a glow-worm to a star. They are, perhaps, almost ready to wrangle with their fate, and wish that Bamfylde Carew had been their father.

Take courage, young men, and hold up your heads; though a New-England clergyman claim you, dare to own your parentage, dare to think yourselves educated, though educated by a Dwight. This language may seem enigmatical to persons at a distance: here it will be well understood, and will, I trust, produce a salutary effect. For I do firmly believe that so great a perversion of truth, so unaccountable a concealment of fact, never was practised or achieved under circumstances so extraordinary, in any other place on the globe. And whatever the reader may think, he may rest assured that we have before us the true ground of the controversy with New-England. I therefore said in the former series, that it all arose from ambition and envy. Our adversaries seem not to be aware that there is a great distinction between commerce and theology; nor yet is New-England altogether ignorant of commerce.

The man whose name has been mentioned would be an ho-

nour to any state or nation. An example so bright, a pattern so illustrious, will long be remembered by hundreds who have felt its powerful influence; will long flourish in the talents he has elicited and matured; will long be celebrated by the genius he has fostered. Dr. Dwight, for general erudition and correct taste, for powerful talents and uncorrupted integrity, is surpassed by no man in our country. Though he may have less starch in his composition than Dr. Buckram; though he may be less susceptible to the courtier's gentle touch than Dr. Weathercock; for he is not a man that says one thing and does another; yet he is, "take him for all in all," as great as *the Great Gun himself.*

The sermons, and other productions of his pen, are brilliant specimens of a great and vigorous intellect, and not unworthy of a descendant of Edwards.

Since the writings of New-England are accused of consisting of nothing but "verbiage, tautology, and nonsense," I will mention one writer, at least, whose sermons, if the reader may give himself the trouble to examine, I can assure him he will acquit of this heavy charge. Smalley's Sermons are able and handsome specimens of clear and conclusive reasoning; they abound little in bold assertions, and his deductions are made with caution and correctness. Nothing but the prejudice of the day withholds from those sermons the high reputation due to solid reasoning, and an able and masterly display of important truth. Warburt on reasoned with more erudition, and Sherlock certainly with many more adventitious advantages, but I request the "Great Gun" himself to lay a sermon of Smalley side by side with one of Sherlock's, or of Tillotson's, or of his own, if he pleases; compare them by paragraphs, and I put him upon his honour, as a gentleman, where I am happy to say I do not scruple him, though I do much as a metaphysician, to say which of them resembles most the progress of Euclid through his 47th.

There is scarcely a writer who carries more of demonstration through every successive period; nor would there be a better test of this, than would result from an attempt to show where his argument fails.

Doctor S. Spring's "Moral Disquisitions," at the very sound of which some nervous people, I suppose, will fall into the moral-

phobia, is the last thing I shall mention. This small book, if read with attention and candour, will not fail to carry conviction to the mind: it dwells on those grand points in which New-England divinity is made the subject of censure. But its fate has been to be condemned by those who have not read it.

There are many writings and publications, the productions of a much younger class of men, which, while they exhibit handsome specimens of classical excellence, maintain and fully illustrate the same strain of sentiment and doctrine; but brevity forbids their enumeration. New-England, in a space of two hundred and fifty miles square, has, in fact, produced more sermons, essays, religious tracts, and theological publications, and those which are respectable and important in their kind, than all the rest of America. Nor is there a people on earth, whose religious tenets are better known, or more ably defended. Yet, we are solemnly assured by an Anti-Hopkinsian sectarian, that there are no *books*, *documents*, &c., by which their principles can be known.

The truth is, there is no such sect of people on earth as *Hopkinsians*, and I would to God there had never been such an appellation known among Christians as Calvinists; especially, without they had adopted the name of a more lovely and Christ like man. This rage for nick-naming sects and exalting the opinions and authorities of men, is but a younger shoot of the grand apostacy.

The books and writings I have mentioned in the very imperfect sketch above, are not censured or exploded, on account of their faults, regarded as literary productions; far from it: that is the least of all the fears of their adversaries. On the contrary, the known conviction they carry with them, the force of native genius they evince, and the spirit of piety they breathe, is what renders them so much dreaded, and is the real clue to the motive of those unwearied endeavours to keep them out of sight, and to hiss them into silence.

Perhaps I ought not to close so copious an account of writers, without saying something about the Investigator. It was a rule with the Spectator, that, so long as he was unknown, he might say what he pleased of himself; might even applaud his own

writings at pleasure; and he often did it. I see no reason why I have not the same right; and perhaps it is even more necessary for me to do it, than it was for him: however as to that, I shall do as I please. In the mean time, I shall say a few things.

In the first place, they may say many unpleasant things, but they cannot say I am not a writer. As a proof that I can write, here is the triangle. It has been written, and it will be read, it will spread wide, and will be remembered. In the second place, this thing has not been excited merely as an attack on error; it is offered to the public as a detergent to an intolerant, bigoted, and persecuting spirit; as a diluent to the moral buckram with which some minds are most dreadfully encased; as a refrigerent to the calenture of ambition; as an emulgent to a selfish heart; as a sudorific to the sedative frigidity of hatred; as a tonic to the atony of general benevolence; as a laxative to the gripe of spiritual pride: in fact, as a universal nostrum against meddling with those who are disposed to think for themselves. And, from concurrent prognostics, I think it must produce a good effect.

In the last place, the Investigator is a physiognomist; gives lectures on heads, and can draw portraits. No portrait has yet appeared, though I perceive some rough etchings in the former series have been readily claimed. One thing I engage, if I hereafter draw a portrait, the true Bucephalus will instantly, as of old, neigh at his own likeness.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. II.

I SAID, in a former number, that attemps had been made to excite an odium against Hopkinsianism. To many, no doubt, this appears an unjust accusation. But however it may appear, it is true, and can be fully vindicated. They say that Hopkinsians hold that a Christian ought to be willing to be damned. The most that Hopkinsians contend for is, *that there may be a*

time when a Christian may feel in his heart to acquiesce in justice of God, even though God should cast him off for ever. Let us examine this point.

The clamors on this subject are too absurd and ridiculous to be heard with patience. I said perhaps enough in a former number; but I will here repeat, that the Hopkinsians hold no more, relative to this matter, than must be admitted by all who believe in divine providence.

Their teachers are in the habit of insisting much on the doctine of submission to the divine will; which, I hope, will not be considered as an error. They hold, that all rational creatures ought to feel perfect resignation to the will of God. But resignation implies holiness, and God has manifested it to be his will, that holy creatures should be happy. A holy creature, therefore, is not required to be willing to be damned, because it is not God's will that he should be damned. They dwell much on this point, that every real Christian entertains a strong sense of his own desert, and of the justice of God, in his condemnation, as a sinner; and they believe that a Christian may be rightly disposed towards God, *i. e.* may love him supremely before he has any evidence that God will save him. In this case, therefore, the converted sinner sees, and fully acquiesces in, the justice of God: nay, is often heard to say, "I feel that God would be just in my condemnation; I feel and know that I deserve his wrath; and I see clearly the beauty and the glory of his justice, as well as of his mercy."

The elements, and every point in this whole business, are now before the reader, and may be reduced to a set of definite propositions, which, for the sake of perspicuity, I will here set down.

1. Every rational creature ought to feel perfect resignation to the will of God. Will any one deny this?

2. Perfect resignation to God's will implies holiness, *i. e.* love to God.

3. It is the will of God that creatures who love him shall not be miserable. This will not be denied.

4. Every good man has a strong sense of the justice of God

in his condemnation as a sinner, for without this he would have no idea of grace in his salvation. This cannot be denied.

The promise of God to save a believer, by grace, cannot diminish that believer's sense of his own desert. Even pardon clearly implies the justice of punishment, or else there can be no grace in pardon.

5. The Christian may feel rightly disposed towards God and his government, that is, may love God, before he has an evidence that God will save him.* This is out of the *triangle*, and will be denied. But I beg the reader, as he values the truth, to attend with candor to this point. It may affect his own religion and hopes more than he is aware of. This proposition is denied, because it militates against the grand fortress and strong hold of what I call selfishness.

I justify the proposition by the following reasons:

1. The real Christian may judge incorrectly of his own exercises and feelings. They may be of the right kind, without his having any degree of confidence in them. Thus I have no doubt it happens, that many a converted soul does not come to a due estimate of his exercises towards God, for hours, nay, days and months after his conversion. He has the feelings of a child, but no confidence in those feelings. It is a very rare thing that a renewed sinner is able to say, "This is faith—this is love—this is holiness—I am born again," immediately, the first moment after his regeneration. When I see a christian come forward in that manner, I am doubtful, and have reason to fear he is deluded. Nor will he be very ready to give in to the opinion of any one who may officiously tell him, he is a renewed man; and such persons there are always at hand. He will perhaps say, "I think I love God—I seem to perceive the glory and fulness of Christ, but the matter is too important; I fear I am mistaken."

2. The Christian's confidence of salvation is not the cause, but the effect, of his love to God. There is not a more fatal error in the church, and to the souls of men, than the supposition, that the sinner begins to love God in consequence of discovering that God is going to save him. The thing itself speaks and shows sheer selfishness, with the broadest grin. I am

amazed that the bare suggestion should not excite alarm and suspicion, distrust and aversion. What says our Saviour? "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?" Do not even sinners love those that love them? Such a kind of love is no sign of grace. That which I feel towards God, when I see that he will save me, is gratitude. Nothing can be more certain than that all the wicked on earth, and that all the devils in hell, could they discover that God was going to make them eternally happy, would love him for it, would feel very grateful, would think him a very good being. Let those who trust in such a kind of love to God be assured, that their foundation is sand.

3. The nature of that love, which is due to God from all creatures, shows, with the brightness of a sunbeam, that it is far above gratitude, or any return or reflection of kindness. What is the ground of the most perfect and exalted friendship among men? Is it a mere requital of kindness, a reflection of interest? Does it rest on the narrow ground of reciprocal benefits? Is it not grounded on the high and estimable qualities which two persons may discover in each other? What if General Washington had reprieved a criminal from death, or paid his ransom, would that criminal perceive in that generous act the highest and utmost ground of respect? Robespierre or Cataline, might have done him the same kindness. In truth, all that God has done for one sinner bears no more proportion to the grounds of regard discoverable in his nature and character, than a single grain of sand bears to the universe. Hence,

4. Love to God is not the effect or consequence of faith; it is coeval with it, nay, it is in, and belongs to the nature of faith. Faith without love is good for nothing—is dead—is no better than the faith of devils. As there can be no holiness in the heart previous to love, and as nothing can be acceptable to God without holiness, we may rest assured that holiness is not only a concomitant, but a constituent of faith.

It may further be observed, that consequent on regeneration there can be no earlier exercise of heart than love to God; and, I leave it to the accute and able theologian to say, whether he can perceive any thing in regeneration itself, but a change of heart from hatred to the love of God. But by love, here, I

mean not only the effect, but the cause ; not only the exercise, but the agency by which it is produced, that is, "the love of God shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost." "For he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

I have, I trust, shown, that love to God is not the effect of faith. The arguments might indeed have been amplified, but that I deem unnecessary, till I shall see stronger reasons brought against them. And, if the love of God be considered objectively, it will be seen, that it cannot arise from a conviction that God is going to save the sinner. This, indeed, has been already stated, but the importance given to this point by the dispute before us, renders it necessary to be more explicit.

The unregenerate man is in a state of condemnation, of course, he has no evidence to believe that God will save him. If regeneration be an instantaneous work, which those admit with whom I am at issue, a moment of time does not intervene between the last sinful exercise of the unregenerate, and the first holy exercise of the regenerate man, or love to God : in a moment he finds himself loving God, and feels delight in the exercise. The first intellectual apprehensions of the *new man* are allowed to be various, by most orthodox divines, *old* as well as *new* : and this must be allowed from the nature of the case, and is confirmed by constant experience. I seldom ever heard two Christians relate having had similar apprehensions, either in the first moments, or first hours or days, of their Christian experience. Their first views may be supposed to take their complexion very much from their state of knowledge, and general habits of thinking. But though these cases doubtless embrace an endless variety, yet there is reason to believe, that God is the grand object of their apprehensions ; and that themselves are generally, if not entirely, out of the question, and not thought of.

I first mention the case of those persons who pretend to no recollection of the time of their conversion ; and many such there are who give abundant evidence of piety. Though they did not know it, there was a time when they were renewed by the Holy Ghost : no thought occurred to them, however, that they were born again, or were going to be saved ; so far from

it, that if any one had told them they were Christians, they would have spurned the idea, and would have said, "you flatter and deceive me." What may we suppose were their exercises during this time? Why, at times they had clear and affecting views of the loveliness and glory of God, of the person and character of Christ, of his fulness and all-sufficiency as a Saviour; but, then, they dare not trust to these views and feelings.

I next mention the case of such as suppose they know the time of their conversion. What were their first views? "There was a God;—he was an infinitely lovely and excellent being. The world was his;—all nature was beautiful and glorious;—all creatures seemed to praise him. The Bible was a new book. There was a Christ willing and able to save the vilest sinner. The gospel was free; the fault was all in the sinner." And I declare to the reader, that not one only nor two, nor ten persons have I heard say, that their view of Christ's sufficiency was such, that they thought they could persuade their friends immediately to embrace him.

But while the new-born Christian had these views, what of himself? Did it occur to him, at the very first instant, that God was going to save him, and, therefore, that he loved God for it?

Was it his very first apprehension that he should be saved; and was that the cause of his joy and love? The idea is shocking, and from my soul, I believe, is revolting to every pious mind; nor do I believe there is a Christian on earth whose recollection of his own experience will confirm it. I readily grant, the Christian's first apprehension may be of the Saviour; but then it will be of him as the son of God. "If thou believest in thine heart that God has raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "But," said Christ to Peter, "whom do ye say that I am?" "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel." "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Christ's person, character, and work, together, form the great object of faith; the assent of the understanding, and cordial consent of the heart to it, form the exercise. But the notion of appropriating faith, so called, i. e. that Christ died for me, and

laying this as the ground and motive of my love to Christ, and prior to it, and these points, in connexion with the doctrine of particular atonement, make out a dead faith and selfish love to the Christian, and an innocent unbelief to the sinner.

To perceive beauty, is to love. Whatever the soul's first apprehension of God is, it is attended with a coeval perception of his glorious excellence and beauty. I wish the candid and ingenuous reader to observe that *acts*, in no case, are the proper objects of love. A series of great actions indicate a great being; but it is not the actions, but the actor we love. But a good action done to me indicates no more goodness than as though it were done to some other man. I ought, in fact, to love God as much for doing good to my neighbour as to myself; and this I certainly shall do, if I "love my neighbour as myself." If this be not correct, let its error be made out.

This brings into view an idea of what is usually termed *disinterested* love, against which a more unreasonable clamour has been raised, and justified by more ridiculous shifts, and more groundless and shameless arguments, than are usually seen marshalled in the field of controversy. Be it admitted, though it is by no means always true, that the new-born soul's first apprehension is of Christ—his first exercise of love is towards Christ; yet there is no otherwise an act of appropriation than what is implied in the perception, "that the Saviour is infinitely glorious and excellent, willing, and all-sufficient to save; the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." He looks up to God, and beholds him a God of love, ruling his kingdom with perfect goodness; that all creatures are safe; that all interests committed to him are secure. It does not, at this time, occur to him that he is born again, or shall be saved. His mind is filled with objects infinitely more glorious and majestic than any consideration of his own interest or salvation. And, although a great leader of the Triangular scheme has lately cautioned his hearers, from his pulpit, to be aware of that "*base and absurd philosophy, which ought not to be dignified by the name of philosophy, which teaches men to leave their own hap-*

*piness and interest out of the question ;"** yet it is a truth which every Christian should know and feel, that a view of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, breaking forth on the mind of the sinner, and especially for the first time, will leave him little room to think of his own dear self, or of his interest or salvation.

Job seemed to have a great deal of that base and absurd philosophy when he said, " I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." David, also, had much of that philosophy when he exclaimed, " when I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou hast made, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him ?" &c.

In that solemn hour a sense of the vileness and desert of sin falls upon the renewed soul with the weight of mountains ; he is amazed at the mercy that has preserved him, and he exclaims with all the feelings of his heart, and energies of his soul, " God would be lovely if he should cast me off for ever." How little is he inclined, at that time, or any other time, to seize upon some divine promise, and boldly and arrogantly threaten *to keep Christ to his word.* I use this phrase because it was very recently used by another Triangular, who boldly exhorted his Christian hearers to *keep Christ to his word*, i. e. to make him fulfil his promises.

Alas ! whither does this strain of Antinomianism tend ? What havock it has already made, and what ruin it threatens ! But is there need to exhort mankind to be more selfish ? is there ground to fear that they will not interpret the bible sufficiently favourable to their own characters and state ? Shall they be exhorted, if I may so say, to toe the mark, and challenge the Saviour to come and meet them upon his peril ? Let that great master in Israel be assured, that he need be under no apprehensions lest his hearers shall not be sufficiently alive to their own *interest and happiness.* They will do that in obedience to man's ruling passion.

* Dr. Mason.

I have dwelt long on this subject; have gone carefully over that ground pointed at with so much scorn, and regarded with so much terror. It amounts to this; that a man under the influence of clear views of God and his government, and of his own exceeding vileness, all which he may have without any certain evidence of his own good estate, may fully acquiesce in the justice of God—may see that God would be just in casting him off, and may feel as though he could love and adore God, if he in fact should do it. Some writers, called Hopkinsian, may have dwelt particularly on this point, but it is a matter which has no necessary connexion with Hopkinsianism—is found in old writers as well as new. Devils who are now suffering the wrath of God, are under the same obligation to love and adore him as the angels of light in heaven. If because he is punishing them, they have a right to hate and abhor him, then they certainly do right in making war on his kingdom.

The reason why such a clamour is raised against this idea is, because men cannot endure the thought that the glory and honour of God should be preferred to the happiness of a wicked man.

No Hopkinsian on earth ever held, or pretended, that a willingness to be damned constitutes a habitual exercise of the Christian; for it is not the will of God that a real Christian should be damned; it would be revolting against God's will, and every Christian knows it; but the willingness contended for is restricted to those moments, while, as yet, the regenerate man has no certain evidence that he is a Christian, or that God will save him, yet still he loves God, and is, of course, willing that God's will shall be done. I believe I am understood, and if so, I have only to say, that on this ground, the Hopkinsian is willing to be at issue with his adversary.

If it be admitted that a man can love God before he has evidence that God will save him, the point is settled; that he ought so to do, nay, that those ought so to do who know he never will save them, few will dare to deny: and this, I think, to the discerning mind, shows what the proper motive of love to God is. Saints and angels do, in fact, love God for the same reason for which wicked men and devils are bound to

love him, viz. because he is infinitely excellent and worthy to be loved.

Whether a Christian can feel willing to be an enemy to God for ever, has no connexion with this entire discussion, since the *willingness* to suffer, of which I have been speaking, relates wholly to the penalty of God's law, and not to a transgression of it. The breath and words, therefore, spent on that idea are wholly wasted, and the terrible blows often given to it, are dealt out to a shadow.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. III.

A CONTRAST.

1. Men are condemned for the sin of Adam.	1. Men are condemned for their own transgressions.
2. Men have a natural or physical incapacity to obey God.	2. Men have no inability to obey God but what arises from want of inclination, or will.
3. Christ made atonement, or propitiation, for none but the elect.	3. Christ made atonement, or propitiation, for all mankind.
4. The gospel invites none but the elect to come to Christ.	4. The gospel invites all mankind to come to Christ.
5. None but the elect are under obligation to believe in Christ.	5. All who hear the gospel are under obligation to believe in Christ.
6. The elect are not bound to believe in Christ till he shows them that he will save them.	6. Every sinner who hears the gospel is bound to believe as much at one time as another.

Hence,

7. No man will be condemned at last for unbelief, because the elect will all believe—

For,

8. Faith consists in believing that Christ died for *me*.

Hence,

9. Those for whom Christ did not die, cannot believe he died for them, unless they can believe what is not true; therefore, they cannot be condemned for unbelief.

Moreover,

10. Faith is neither an exercise of the will nor understanding, but a *divine principle*.

11. The Christian begins to love Christ when he finds Christ will save him, and that is the true motive of his love.

Wherefore,

12. Saving faith is before, and, of course, without love to God, or holiness, unless holiness be different from love.

13. A Christian cannot be disinterested—the interest of self must be at the bottom, and the moving spring of all his actions—even of his religion.

Hence,

7. All who hear the gospel and do not believe, will be condemned for their unbelief—

For,

8. Faith consists in "receiving and resting on Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel."

Hence,

9. As Christ died for all men, any sinner who hears the gospel can receive and rest on him alone for salvation; therefore, any unbeliever will be condemned.

Moreover,

10. Faith is an exercise both of the will and understanding, and a *divine principle* is a phrase without an idea.

11. The Christian begins, to love Christ before he knows he will save him, and loves him for other and higher reasons.

Wherefore,

12. Saving faith is love in its very nature, and is a holy exercise, because love is holiness.

13. A shameless and barefaced confession, as unworthy of a philosopher as a christian!

Reader, here is a contrast to the purpose; read it, and be astonished; and, I think, you cannot but be astonished. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of selfish Antinomianism?

When I had got thus far, sickened with the odious narrowness, the grovelling sefilshness of this triangular place, I dropped my pen and retired to rest. "In the thoughts and visions of my head upon my bed," I fancied myself travelling alone, through an extensive and desolate country; it was towards night, and being on foot, I seemed weary with the labours of a long day's travel; I began to look out for a house of entertainment, but could discern little save now and then a hamlet of unpromising aspect, and at a distance from the road. At length, however, a fabric, of extraordinary appearance, drew my attention, and, as I approached, a signal, near the gate, gave me the agreeable notice that it was a public house. This building was perfectly triangular, resembling an obtuse prismatic cone, cut perpendicular to its principal axis, standing on its base, rising to a great elevation, and terminated in a spire. It was very pleasantly situated on the point of junction between two large streams of water, and appeared like a place of great traffick.

I perceived much company in the house, and, on entering, a man immediately presented himself whom I concluded to be the landlord. His body was exceedingly corpulent and large, with a little three-square head, and eyes very sharp and twinkling, which seemed "to look at one another."* However, he received me with a smile, and on asking for entertainment be assented, and told me that in his house I would find accommodations. The company were all strangers to me; nor did I ever see so many cross-eyed people together before. I took a seat by myself, and waited, with some impatience, for supper. But my curiosity and astonishment were equally excited to perceive, that not only the house itself, but every thing in it, was in a triangular shape; the doors and windows, the rooms and fireplaces, all exhibited that form. The chairs and tables were tripods—the plates and platters, triangular concaves, and the glasses and tumblers, hollow prisms; but every thing elegant in its kind, and highly finished.

At length supper was announced, and I took a seat at a three-cornered table, with a numerous company, who seemed as well

* Genius theologiæ, Novi Ebori.

pleased as myself at the sight of something edible. We commenced with little ceremony, and happening to sit near the master of the house, I attempted some conversation with him. He was affable, communicative, and sententious, as tavern keepers usually are. The provision, of which there were three courses, appeared well, but had, I thought, somewhat of a peculiar taste. I called for pepper, and for salt, but still it did not do; and, I believe, the landlord himself perceived that my taste was not well suited. At length he said, "give me leave, sir, to help you to a relish which I think you will like, for I have never had one at my table who did not admire it."

"This, sir," continued he, "is, perhaps, the most famous root in the world; its botanical name is *amor sui*; it is a very fine root for the table, and is beginning to be cultivated in these parts, particularly in *two large botanic gardens*, whence it is sent all over the country, and they find it very profitable." And perceiving he had some knowledge in botany, while he was putting some of it on my plate, I asked him if he knew to which of the Linnæn classes it belonged. He said, he believed it was to the Pantandria. Whilst I was recollecting whether Linnæus had such a class, he said, smiling, "the name of this root sounds better in Latin than in English; it would hardly do to give it a translation."

I perceived they ate of it, round the table, by spoonfuls; and the landlord said, for his part, he could, at any time, make a meal of it; in fact, wanted nothing else.

For the first moment, I thought the taste of the *amor sui* very agreeable. It had a racy and aromatic gusto, highly grateful to the palate; but, after a while, it began to bite my tongue, burn my lips, draw up my mouth, contract my œsophagus; and, in short, the more I tasted it the worse it was. It put me in mind of Allen's attempt to eat the olive. A gentleman, near me, seeing my embarrassment, observed that, like most high flavoured things, at first, it seemed rather pungent and harsh; "but," said he, "sir, I have no doubt you will soon be fond of it." A sour looking robust fellow, whose eyes were almost wrong side outwards, declared it was now used at every genteel table, and he never saw a gentleman but what liked it.

"Why," said he, "in Scotland, my native country, some call it the ministerial root, because so very convenient to cultivate on their glebes; it succeeds well on lands which will produce nothing else, and will, in this country, soon be thought more valuable than the potato; and a man that does not like it must be a fool." He further added, that he had recommended it, with great success, in this country; that he, and several others, were determined to bring it into general cultivation and use.

In a region in all respects so perfectly trigonal, the effect was wonderful. I could not repress my curiosity, and I feared I should give offence by appearing to inspect the various little articles which lay about my plate, not to say that a three-square spoon did not very well suit my mouth. As the landlord seemed willing to converse, I at last summoned sufficient confidence to inform him, that my curiosity and admiration had been not a little excited at the very singular form of his house and furniture; and I hoped he would not think me impertinent, in wishing to know the motive for adopting this figure.

After a little pause, with a serious look, he replied, that I was right in wishing an explanation, and that no offence would be taken.

"This mode of building, sir," said he, "I have received from my ancestors, as they did from their's; and you must know it is the true *primitive form*. Our first and grandest maxim is, *never to admit of innovation*. This maxim is founded in the fact, that although a little good may come, yet a world of evil does actually come from innovations. Why sir," continued he, with increasing earnestness, "all the bad practices in the whole world are but innovations. Satan was the first innovator, and his first innovation was made in heaven itself. Then, our mother Eve made a sad innovation on the tree of knowledge, and drew Adam, our father, into it. All human knowledge, sir, is but innovation upon man's primitive state, which was pure ignorance; and 'ignorance is the mother of devotion.'

"With regard to this house, sir, it is of the true original, uncorrupted Tuscan order. Three posts were first set on the ground, and their tops fastened together: some say *four*, but, sir, I say *three*, which I can demonstrate from the composition

and resolution of forces; besides, three is the simplest form, and three denotes union, strength, and perfection; it is a mysterious number, as every body knows. When four-square buildings came in fashion, this primitive form was forced to flee into the wilderness, just as the true church did, when the great whore of Babylon usurped her place; and they will remain there, and emerge together." He paused here, and waited for my reply.

I told the landlord, he had satisfied me with the account he had given of his house. He acknowledged, that there were some inconveniences attending this figure of things; but, then, he said, that the beauty and charm of uniformity carried every thing before it; and, for his part, his object was to have but *one standard:* every thing must be alike. "But sir," said he, "we carry this point farther than you imagine; for soon after our children are born, we have a triangular box, or hat, if you please, made for their heads, which they wear till the head grows in the box into the shape we wish; and, as they grow larger, we enlarge those helmets according to their years, till at length the head becomes settled in the shape you see mine, which form we consider as highly favourable to acuteness of intellect. I then noticed, that the *os frontis* and *os occipitis* of his head formed the upper angles, and his chin the lower; so that the top of the head formed the base, and the chin the apex. In the course of the evening, I had opportunity to see that all his numerous children had heads of the same form as their father:* indeed, Lavater admits, that straight lines in the skull indicate strength and decision.

I perceived that this innkeeper was a mystic, had studied in the occult sciences, and was even acquainted with the cabalistic doctrines. "Sir," said he, "the form of all things about me, is founded in much deeper reasons than you probably imagine. You know, doubtless, that infinite perfection can only subsist in a triune being. Among intellectual creatures, there are but three grand orders, angels, men, and devils: there are, in all existence, but three kinds, spirit, matter, and mixed. The

* "What do the *old divines* say about it?"

heavenly regious are divided into three provinces, the first, second, and third heavens: duration has three modifications, present, past, and future. Adam's race are all in one of three habitations, earth, heaven, or hell; every man has three important states, in the body, out of the body, and again in the resurrection state. Every solid substance in nature has three dimensions, length, breadth, and height. But," continued he, "to come near to the point, you must be one side of a line, on the other side, or else exactly on it; and, as for the properties of the triangle, philosophers, from the days of Euclid, and long before, until now, have never been able to explore them. By the triangle, the mariner guides his ship across the ocean, the surveyor measures the earth, and the astronomer the heavens. In a word, I take the triangle to be the symbol of strength, wisdom, and perfection; and I am strongly inclined to believe, that the soul of man is a perfect spiritual triangle."

Perceiving his enthusiasm, equal to that of Dr. Primrose for monogamy, or Don Quixote for chivalry, I nodded assent to his arguments, and presently desired I might be shown my lodgings. The landlord here informed me, that his beds, which were numerous, were all pre-occupied; and, unless I could accept of a fellow lodger, he could make no arrangement that would be convenient. In fact, he said, his usual custom was to put three in each bed, corresponding to the three sides of the triangle; when, in order to avoid mixing head and feet, each one must bend himself into the true figure. I assented, however, to take one, and a gentlemen present ascended with me to the chamber, of which, I understood, there were about 20 or 30 in the house. But here, a difficulty arose: the bed was a perfect triangle, and so scanty, that even the sides of it were not as long as its intended occupants; however, each of us took an angle for our heads, and let our feet contend in the remaining angle; and they were antipodes, with a witness. A query arose, whether these were not the beds spoken of in scripture, where it says, "their bed is shorter than that one may stretch himself upon it, and their covering narrower than that he can wrap himself therein."

My fellow lodger told me that the landlord was invincible in

this whim, that he would have every bed in his house of the same size and shape; that it happened, not long since, that some gentlemen travelling, who had portable bedsteads with them of the usual form, had put up there, and, for their own convenience, had erected and prepared their own beds. The landlord, finding it out, went up to their chamber in a rage, and by the aid of his servants, drew them out of bed, threw their furniture out of the window, and expelled them from his house.*

Our situation was such as promised little comfort; but being weary, I soon fell asleep, and had the following very extraordinary dream, which may be called a dream two stories high, or *Somnium in Somnio.*

I fancied myself in a region of great darkness, saving what dubious light arose from distant fires, whose pale and curling flames immediately brought to my mind the Tartarian lake. Before I could look round me a second time, a peal of thunder shook all the region, and a glare of light showed me thousands of beings seated round a vast amphitheatre facing a central throne. The lofty arches of Pandamonium, sustained on pillars of gold and illuminated by coruscations of flame, from the burning lake, resembled a structure of solid fire. The perpetual noise of distant thunders and tempests, which shook the fabric, prevented my hearing the debates and consultations. At length, however, a voice more shrill than the loudest trumpet reached my ear. "Repair to your stations, and discharge your duties, or the city is lost to my kingdom. Show yourselves worthy of your prince, and, since it is the will of fate that you contend against a superior foe, acquire fame by boldness and perseverance. Address yourselves to every individual, and yield to nothing but almighty power. Be off, and let us see

> What reinforcement we can gain from hope
> If not, what resolution from despair."

The session was closed in a manner not very agreeable to spectators in the gallery, for no sooner was the last word pro-

* He would not endure them, "no, not for an hour."

nounced, than the vast assembly rose with a noise and rapidity equal to the explosion of a thousand magazines of powder; and each one, in departing, resembled the tract of a meteor. I know not what become of me, till, some time after, I found myself walking down the park on that side next to Broadway, when, as usual, many people were moving up and down the street. The sun from his meridian throne smiled with peculiar radiance, and the prospect was gay and interesting. What most engaged my attention was innumerable winged genii, drest in the robes of Iris, with golden drapery floating around them, which seemed soft as air, and in a long train gradually melted into the invisible beam of the sun. One of these flew merrily about the head of each person I saw, keeping pace, as they walked, and acted much like bees when busied in extracting the mellifluous dew from the heads of clover in a meadow: sometimes at one ear, and then at the other, sometimes for a moment perching on, then vaulting over, and flying round the head. The ladies' large bonnets appeared to form for them a pleasing vehicle, resembling an airy chariot below, and, when thus perched, they might be mistaken for a lofty and elegant plume. Excepting a little cloven foot, very sharp and threatening talons, which were, however, generally concealed, and a proboscis resembling an exquisitely fine dagger, I could see nothing about them which looked suspicious. Although nothing is extraordinary in a dream, in which wayward fancy delights to sport with the laws of reason, I was surprised at what I saw, and recollected the words of the poet:

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep."

At that moment my curiosity was awakened to know whether I had not one of these ærial attendants about my head; and, looking round, I saw behind me a vast figure of terrific form and aspect, whom I could not for a moment mistake for his infernal majesty. He has been so often described that I suspect I should add nothing new. I will only say, that his glowing and protruded eyeballs evinced an ardour and pene-

tration of vision, not very pleasant to look at, or easy to scrutinize: and his whole form reminded me of "the sun eclipsed," or "archangel ruined."

My astonishment was increased when I perceived in his hand a litttle book, which I immediately knew to be the TRIANGLE: with a stern voice, and a frown which seemed to insphere him in darkness, he demanded whether I was the author of that book. "Great Lucifer," said I, "if your knowledge is as great as is generally imagined, you surely must know who wrote it." "Yes," says he, "I well know that you wrote it, and I am now come to take vengeance." There is a vulgar notion prevailing that no living person can speak to a spirit; but as this vision came up through the "ivory gate," the reader will not be surprised at this dialogue. I asked him what fault he found with that book. "Fault," said he, "it is an audacious attack on some of my best friends; and you have outdone the devil himself in lies and slander." "Very well," I replied, "if you will show me a falsehood, in all that book, you may take me where you please."

I had often, in the course of my life, raised a query, in my own mind, whether the devil could read: being strongly persuaded, that, like many of his followers, he had condemned books which he had never read; and assured that to prevent people from reading was one of his devices; though somewhat afraid of incensing him, I made bold, however, to ask him if he could read. "You shall soon know," replied he, "whether I can read." With that he turned to the 27th page; "There, you say that a rat's tail was never measured: which is false; the zoölogists have measured it a hundred times, for they measure all animals, even the legs of a grasshopper. You have told, sir, as great a lie as Goldsmith did when he said that the horned cattle of America shed their horns every year; or as ——— did when he said that the ants in South America would carry off every vestige of large villages of houses in three years.

I told him, however, that I did not mean to assert that a rat's tail was absolutely never measured, but that Hopkins and Calvin never measured it. "Hah," replied he, very quick, "How

do you know that Hopkins and Calvin never did it? And how dare you assert what you do not know? Hopkins and Calvin did things of less importance than measuring rats' tails, and as for you, you cannot say that they did not spend half their time in that business." "But, sir," said I, for we now began to grow somewhat polite, "if that book is full of lies, do you not like it the better for that, for it is said that you are the father of lies?"—"Come, come," said he, "those that wish to please me must tell lies about my enemies, not my friends; at any rate, they must lie to suit my purposes. I don't, indeed, care about abstract and metaphysical truth; that I confess I hate as most of my best friends do—but truth or falsehood, which suits my interest, I approve of. For, sir, you must know that I am a selfish being." I was going to tell him that I presumed I had now discovered the true cause of his resentment towards that book; but he sternly interrupted me, "Come along, you are convicted;" and I believe he would have laid hands upon me had he not been prevented by another phenomenon.

At that moment the ground shook, and a superior light, that cast no shadow, seemed breaking on the heavens. A cloud appeared on the northern hemisphere, whose arching sides and silvered edges gradually rose to a summit, on which sat a personage, which every eye, as by intuition, perceived to be immortal Truth.

Her throne seemed ivory, and over her white robes floated an azure mantle besprinkled with drops of heavenly lustre. On her head was a chaplet of such flowers as spring in the regions of bliss; and the summit of the diadem was distinguished by a centre of rays that resembled the morning star. The bloom of eternal youth was in her countenance, but her majestic form can only be described in the language of that world where she is fully known. In her right hand was "the sword of the spirit," and at her side the symbols of power and majesty. Beneath her feet the clouds were condensed in awful darkness, and her chariot was borne along by the breath of the Almighty.

I saw no more of the demon or his genii, and while every eye beheld this glorious personage from afar, a gentle, but ma-

jestic voice, in slow and solemn accents, was borne to every beholder along the whispering breeze.

" Unhappy people ! Truth alone conducts you to happiness : Her path is plain—her progress is pleasant—her end is glorious. Other guides obtrude upon you their services, but they impose on your credulity, and will betray your confidence. Ignorance was born blind : Prejudice has put out her own eyes : Error speaks but to deceive, and allures but to destroy : Ambition seeks you as her prey : Tradition is importunate without reason : Pride is the sister of Folly, and without goodness, and always carries about with her the weapon on which she will one day fall : and selfishness, with fascinating smile, presents you with her bowl of deadly poison. Too long have you followed these fallacious guides. I am TRUTH :—It is my province to conduct you in the path of life, to the bosom of the God of truth and love." She ceased, and while thousands yet listened for something more, her softened close seemed to die away in a distant strain of heavenly music.

But for my triangular bed, this delightful dream might have continued, but here the antipodes of my bed fellow gave me so violent a shock that I awoke, and behold it was a dream ! But having now got back to the first floor of my dream, it appeared that I had been waked at a very critical moment ; for I heard a great uproar and running about the house below, and somebody broke into our chamber, and, in great haste, told us that the house was all on fire, which the bursting of smoke and flame into our chamber but too well confirmed. We sprung out of bed, and hastened down stairs, where we learned that the landlord, who always slept in the apex, or upper angle of his house, because he loved a lofty situation, was *hemmed in* by the flames, and likely to perish. How it proved I cannot say, for here the cry of fire and ringing of bells, in the city, awaked me in good earnest.

I have heard it remarked by an old observer, that the first thought which strikes the mind after waking, is generally the best clue to the interpretation of a dream. Whether the first of these dreams is allegorical, I leave it for the reader to judge ; and whether the second is prophetic, events will declare.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. IV.

WHY is the word of God called "*the sword of the Spirit?*" There is great force, appropriateness, and beauty in this metaphor. In ancient warfare, the sword was the principal weapon; was of such use and importance, that it is often put for the whole offensive armour; and persons slain in war, are said to be slain of the sword. The scriptures speak of *pestilence*, *sword*, and *famine*, as the three great scourges of men. The sword of the Spirit is that weapon in the hand of God by which his enemies are subdued, and brought to bow to the sceptre of his grace. "The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword."

The object of this number is a solemn appeal to all who shall read it:—to the friends and the enemies of truth, to the people of this country at large, to this city, and to the men in this city with whom this controversy principally lies. I appeal to their consciences before God, and I ask them, what general strain of preaching—what scheme of doctrine, in our own country, has had most influence in promoting the great work of reformation—in turning many to righteousnes? What strain of doctrine has had the happiest influence in turning mankind from their vices, and causing them to assume the profession, and exhibit the evidences, of religion, in their life and conversation? Under what strain of preaching, and through what parts of the Union do Sabbath breaking, intemperance, profanity, debauchery, and gambling, least prevail?

Alas! this will be read by many, probably, with a careless reflection about provincial prejudices. But the truth cannot be altered. And the truth is, that what is here usually intended by *the New-England strain of doctrine*, including divine sovereignty, general atonement, moral inability, a probationary state, the invitation of the gospel to all men, and their collateral points, have been the doctrines in this country which have been attended with revivals of religion, and great reformations,

among all ranks of people. Wherever these doctrines have been faithfully preached these salutary effects have followed.

On the contrary, show me the city, the town, the village, the tract of country, where these doctrines have not been preached, but where they have been opposed, beat down, ridiculed, and cast out, as many in this city endeavour to do by them, and I will show you a place where religion is little thought of, where the sword of the Spirit has lain dormant, where the work of God has rarely, if ever, been carried on. God is a sovereign, and surely is not limited to any certain course of means; yet, ordinarily, where the proper means are used the desired effects will follow. From the days of Edwards, till this time, in those parts of this country where these doctrines have been preached, there have been frequent reformations—extending often through the towns of a county; sometimes for a hundred miles in extent; sometimes, indeed, limited to a town or neighbourhood. A t the present moment, indeed, for several years past, and almost without intermission, large districts have been favoured with what, from their fruits and effects, we are authorized to call outpourings of the Spirit of God.

And, I ask, for I will not be deterred by a false delicacy, or by the fear of what prejudice or malevolence may say; I ask, what is, and has been, the religious state of those parts of our country where these doctrines have never been heard? Though, indeed, as I said in a former number, these doctrines have been disseminated, more or less, though in some places but transiently, in every part of the Union; and I repeat, that, in every part of the Union, they have been, more or less, favoured with tokens of divine approbation.

With regard to these revivals of religion, I am aware that various opinions are entertained. I am by no means about to deny that some persons, who, on these occasions, espouse and profess religion, do not continue afterwards to give evidence of sincerity; yet, every man is awfully concerned to see to it, that in speaking against these revivals, he does not speak against the work of the Spirit of God, and thereby blaspheme the Holy Ghost.

If these revivals are not attended with indications and

fruits, which every Christian will allow must attend religion, let them be dishonoured with the name of delusion : for instance, they are usually accompanied with seriousness, anxiety, and alarm. But is this an evidence of delusion? When a man becomes convinced that he is a sinner, and exposed to eternal perdition thereby, is it unreasonable to suppose he will feel great alarm ? Are his fears groundless ? Rather, are not those who feel no anxiety, although exposed to God's eternal wrath, in a state of complete infatuation ? Was ever delusion so grea t as that which reigns over the man that can despise, equally, both the favour and the wrath of God ?

Religious awakenings are usually attended with seriousness ; a desire to frequent places of public worship and instruction ; and a total cessation of ordinary amusements, and even sometimes of business. But, are these signs of delusion ? Would it not be happy for all men, if they would seek first the kingdom of God, with great importunity ? Are not the hopes of heaven, and the fears of hell, when brought home to the mind, stronger motives of action than our ordinary amusements and pursuits ? " What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?"

If these reformations do not reform mankind, they certainly are not the work of God. If they do not cause the drunkard to become temperate, the thief and the cheat to become honest men, the debauched and the lascivious to become chaste, the swearer to become decent in his language, the immoral to become regular and exemplary ; if they do not make the relations of life more endearing, by being sustained better, and the duties of life delightful, by a habitual performance of them, they have no claim to be of God. But, if they produce these effects, and actually make men better, more punctual in the discharge of the duties of the first and second table, they are not the work of the devil ; but it is the work of the devil to censure and despise them, and bring them into disrepute. It is the work of the devil to laugh—no, devils cannot laugh when they see men concerned about their salvation.

Is it an extraordinary thing, that a discovery of the fulness and beauty of the Saviour, his willingness and power to save the

soul, should occasion sinners to rejoice? Who is there, that had but a feeble glimpse of the great plan of salvation, through Christ, who would not rejoice, even with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? It is surely no light thing to be redeemed from the curse of the law; "to be made free by the Son," and to become an heir of his glory, a subject of his blessed and eternal kingdom.

If those people who are concerned, and greatly alarmed for their eternal interests; who seem to forsake all other pursuits for those of religion; who rejoice in Christ, and break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by turning to God: I say, if these are not the religious—if these are not Christians, who, and where are they? Are they those who go merrily on through life, without regrets for the past, or fears for the future; who are bewildered in the avocations of business, or fascinations of pleasure; who are not troubled with superstitious fears of hell, and feel no apprehension of divine displeasure; who neither trouble themselves, nor others, with obtrusive concerns of a future world? Are these the followers of Christ, "who are not conformed to the world, but are transformed by the renewing of their minds?"

Are the gay and thoughtless, whose hours are divided between routs and assemblies, entertainments and parties of pleasure; the proud and ambitious, whose stern and haughty eye is intensely fixed on the glittering summit of fame and power? Are these the followers of Christ, and shall they hear the high and solemn benediction, "Come, ye blessed of my Father?"

When a number of men associate together from motives of pride and ambition; build themselves a splendid house of worship, and endeavour to fill it, by artfully drawing to it members of other churches; alluring by intrigue, by whispers, and incantations, those abortions of slander, the still-born brood of falsehood, and all under the name of proselytism—is this the church of Christ?

There are many who wish people to become religious in a more rational way, with less noise and disturbance than usually attend these reformations. Far be it from me to wish to exclude reason from the faith or practice of Christians: but, is it

unreasonable that a concern so vast as the soul's salvation, and, especially, so opposite to the general habits and tempers of mankind as religion, should become a public sentiment—should affect a whole society with a strong and simultaneous sensation; nay, should create a public passion? All great interests, all public concerns, have this effect, though they are far less important than religion. What is the effect, when a nation is agitated by the spirit of war? The enthusiasm descends even to children; the theme resounds in the songs of the milk-maid and shepherd—in the conversation of the peasant and plough-boy. What if the inhabitants of an entire county, or province, were about to remove from one kingdom to another; a general sentiment would be awakened, and it would become the topic of public conversation and attention—of animation and enthusiasm.

Where great numbers embrace religion at one time, it is a true and real emigration, and one infinitely more important than a removal to India: "They are translated out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Is it wonderful, if it should excite strong and lively sensations? and would it not be more wonderful, if it should not incorporate with it the natural passions of the mind, and sometimes be marked with enthusiasm. Dr. Young says, "an undevout astronomer is mad:" but, it is easier to study astronomy without devotion, than it is to feel religion without passion.

We are not required to love our neighbour better than ourselves; but the great apostle of the gentiles declares, "if we are beside ourselves, it is for your sakes." If an apostle could be beside himself, could almost lose the command of his reason for others, surely it is not to be wondered at, nor faulted, if men are overwhelmed with fear, elevated with hope, enraptured with joy, in contemplation of the amazing destinies of their own souls.

I fear that these nice objections to religious revivals originate from wrong views of religion itself; they seem evidently to spring from a disgust at the sight of great numbers seeking for salvation at once. They want people should keep still, and say nothing about their hopes or fears of futurity. They are not at all disgusted at the strong passions, and enthusiastic feelings,

often manifested at horse races, in theatres, at concerts of music, in assemblies where great events are celebrated, and in the field of battle. Man, it seems, may be impassioned about every thing but religion; there he must be cold as marble, unfeeling as clay, dull as lead. He must, by all means, have the forms of religion, and that with as much pomp, splendor, and ceremony as you please; but he must go through those forms with as little ardour, and as lifeless a monotony, as the moonlight shadows of the churchyard move over the congregation of the dead.

Whether the revivals of religion in this country have been productive of good, which, at least, would be evidence in their favour, I leave those who possess the means to judge for themselves; and, in the silent hour of calm reflection, they will judge justly. In the heat of controversy, and under the painful stimulus of contradiction, good men err in judgment by overlooking the evidence of facts; but when these casual clouds are past over, the sun breaks forth.

But, wherever reformations are discountenanced and spoken against by public teachers, they are seldom observed to take place; and, I call upon the reader of these numbers, to look around him in this city, and mark in what congregations these appearances have occured; for, while I mean to cast no reflections, I neither mean to flatter the vanity of men. The truth will bear its own weight, and will approve itself to every man's conscience before God.

The strain of preaching which, in the former series, I have styled triangular, because incessantly urging three grand points, which I consider as erroneous, as far as I have been able to observe, is rarely, if ever, attended with salutary effects: it does not carry conviction to the mind; men's understandings revolt from it. Tell men that they are condemned for a crime they never committed; that they will be punished for what they cannot do; or, that they will be doubly and aggravatedly condemned for not believing in a Saviour who never died for them, and they will feel no conviction. However they may force themselves into an involuntary assent, into an artificial, as I have already said, a kind of technical belief of such propositions,

there will be no conviction of the understanding; for there can be none. They may, indeed, say, and perhaps truly, "my teacher is a great divine, has studied these things, and surely ought to know; and I have nothing to do but to surrender my understanding to his opinions and doctrines." But, alas! the mind drawn up to this tension is like an elastic bow, which owes its figure to the cord whch holds it; its strength is overpowered, but not its tendency.

Many of the doctrines of revelation are such, as human reason would never reach, unaided by divine light; but being revealed, there is no doctrine of revelation apparantly absurd or repugnant to reason. The three grand points, however, which form the triangle, are not the only ones which, in their conviction on the mind, remind me of the bended bow: their notion of faith is inexplicable, and their idea of justification covered with mist. As for faith, it is not *opinion*, *assent*, *reason*, *knowledge*, nor *love*; it is nothing which properly belongs to human perceptions, nor exercises; I have sometimes heard them call it a divine principle, but never could learn what principle was, or wherein it consisted. If I have been able to learn what they mean by justification, it is, that a certain quantity of Christ's righteousness is taken and put into the Christian, on account of which he is justified. The scriptures teach us that Christ has atoned for sin, and the sinner is fully pardoned and freely justified, in consideration of what Christ has done to magnify the law of God: but the notion of a transfer of Christ's righteousness, so as to make it the righteousness of the sinner, is using words without ideas.

Opposition to the doctrines which have almost uniformly marked the course of reformations in this country, and, in the hands of God, have been the cause of those reformations, can be regarded in no other light than as a deadly aim at reformation itself. He who strikes at the cause, strikes with a bolder hand, and with higher aim, than he who strikes at the effect. He who proves that a reformation, so called, is but an excitement of natural passion, and that its subjects may apostatize from their profession, proves little; at least, but a local fact: but he who makes war on that strain of preaching and scheme

of doctrine, which has been followed by nearly all the revivals of religion in a nation, if he succeed, will not be troubled with apostacies, for he will see no reformations; he will have the pleasure, if it may be called a pleasure, of seeing people go carelessly on through life, with no troublesome anxieties about religion, or the life to come: he will tell them, from sabbath to sabbath, that "Christ died for none but the elect; that he died for them, because they were the elect; and that when he makes known to them their election, then they ought to love and obey him:" they will make their own improvement, "that all anxieties about salvation are useless and vain. Why should we borrow trouble, or anticipate evil? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. If he has died for us, he will make it known to us in time; if not, then we owe him no gratitude; and as we were all condemned in Adam, we have nothing on our own account to regret."

That people will quiet their consciences, and repose calmly, and sleep soundly on this triangular bed, is as sure as that the sun rises and sets. This triple, nay, quadruple thraldom, in which their own voluntary agency is in no way implicated, soothes their slumber, and not a little gratifies their pride; still more so does the soporific dose "descend into their bowels like water, and like oil into their bones," when a religion is held up before them which is no business of theirs; which gives them a happy passiveness, and is every whit, and in all respects, as distinct from their moral feelings and powers, as the state to which it offers a remedy is without their accountability or blame. As they had nothing to do in bringing themselves into sin; nothing to do in getting themselves out of it, so they are highly satisfied to learn, that they have nothing to do when fairly out of it. As for faith, which is the body of their religion, it is no exercise of theirs, and has no connexion with their moral exercises in its origin, nature, or object, for it is neither perception nor volition, knowledge nor love. They have no virtue, for there is no such thing; and, in fine, they seem to be allowed to have nothing on earth, properly to be called theirs, but a little selfishness.

Such a strain of preaching will scarcely be followed by a spirit of reformation. The process of conversion and of Chris-

tianizing under these tenets will, indeed, make little noise: a person goes to his minister, and tells him he has some thoughts about religion. The clergyman asks him, "Do you verily believe that all men are justly condemned for the sin of Adam?" "Yes." "Do you acknowledge yourself worthy of endless misery for what he did?" "Yes." "Do you believe yourself totally incapacitated to obey God, or do any thing which he requires?" "Yes." "And can you not love Christ, who has been so good as to die for you, and has done, and will do every thing for you, and will carry you to heaven, and make you eternally happy there?" "O yes, I should be very ungrateful not to love one who died for me, and will save me." "Very well! you have nothing to do but confirm yourself in these sentiments; you had better join the church; there is reason to believe you are one of the elect."

Let it not be understood that I here pretend to give all the words that pass between the catechist and his catechumen, but I give the great features, and the leading points. Enough more words are used; but as he is never made to feel the true blame of his condition, he never feels a proper repentance, neither can he have just conceptions of the nature or application of the remedy. These convictions are sufficiently silent for the most fastidious, and are followed by conversions to a selfish, opinionated, intolerant temper and character; even, sometimes, to that degree, that a candid observer is at a loss whether such a conversion is more the subject of felicitation than of regret. If not twofold more a child of hell, he is, at least, twofold more a child of prejudice, bigotry, and persecution.

If some men shall flutter and flounce remarkably in reading these remarks, let them see to it, lest they confirm the suspicion that they are the "wounded birds."

As this Number is an appeal to the eye of the public respecting the usefulness and importance of revivals of religion, I deplore that I am compelled to add, that the instances which have come under the inspection of this city, are mournfully few. Look into those large congregations whose fame has been

spread wide by the splendour of the great names of the men, who are "the angels of those churches." And, I ask those "angels" whether they would not rejoice to see one general reformation pervading all their assemblies, and spreading through the hundreds and thousands of their congregations? I am certain the angels of heaven would rejoice. Would they not be glad to see all their people roused at once, to secure the interests of their souls? Would they not rejoice to see the whole population of this capital moved, as by one spirit, to secure one grand object? Surely, such a moment would not be greater than the weight of the concern depending. A heathen monarch, of a much greater city than this, once rose up from his throne, and covered himself with sackcloth—was followed by his court and nobles, and by all the people; even food was interdicted, in a solemn fast, for three days. This was done because God had declared that Nineveh should be destroyed. And is there no reason to believe that God's anger burns against this city? Has not the cry of its wickedness gone up to heaven! And would not a reformation that should visit every house, and forcibly seize every mind, be desirable? Would it not occasion joy in heaven? What if all the immense crowds that move through the streets were suddenly and strongly impressed with the belief that they were infinitely vile in the sight of God; that they were hastening to the bar of judgment, and to an eternal world of retribution? What sudden alterations should we see! Would our streets resound by night with horrible oaths and execrations? Would hundreds of houses be crowded with scenes of drunkenness, debauchery, violence, and obscenity? Would our docks, and vessels, and lanes, and alleys, teem with wretched people in whom the last efforts of vice have left the semblance of humanity, but identified with every thing loathsome and detestable? Would even crowds of chidren be heard profanely vociferating the awful name of God in their common sports and pastimes? Alas! it is not considered that the interests and destines of every one of those souls are as truly great as those of the first rank of people. The shadowy vale of death once past, and the soul discumber-

ed of its adventitious advantages, there will appear little distinction between the prince and beggar.

But what would be the effect of such a reformation as this? Would it not be the theme of general conversation? What crowds would throng the churches? And would it be admirable, if, under the strong impulse of a general sensation, it should become what may be termed a public passion? Perhaps even business, for a while, might be, in a manner, suspended; and the ordinary, even the innocent, amusements and diversions of the city would be forgotten.

A gloomy scene! methinks I hear some one say; and yet, reader, every one of these gay people will soon see gloomier scenes than this. The hour of death, and the solemn audit before the throne of judgment, will be more gloomy and dreadful, and, without reformation, there will be eternal gloom and horror. Nor yet would such a scene as this be attended with so much gloom and misery as now pervades the city. Ineffable joy and pleasure would fill every pious mind at the prospect of thousands of people forsaking wickedness and turning to God. Religion is not of a gloomy, melancholy nature, and the concern and anxiety attending reformations is caused, not by religion, but by a consciousness of the want of it.

Be it that such a reformation, in this city, would be attended with some instances of delusion—some indications of fanaticism; how much deeper is the delusion that now reigns over the great mass of people, while they neglect their eternal interests, and despise, and dishonour the God that made them. A stronger fanaticism hurries them onward towards eternal ruin than that attends the religions enthusiast in the favour of his devotions. The stern and lofty front of wickedness everywhere displayed —everywhere menacing—everywhere daring and obtrusive, defies every thing short of almighty power. But before the spirit of God be sent "to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," it shall melt like wax—it shall vanish like smoke, "for strong is his hand, and high is his right hand."

Such an event could not take place but with a general and strong sensation. Any judge of human nature will perceive

that an irreligious—a wicked man cannot suddenly pass from that to a religious state without great anxiety and alarm; without unusual agitation of mind. It is not merely to say, "I will now become religious," and the work is done: habits corroborated by time, and identified with nature, are not thus broken through. The allurements of wickedness are strong, and are known, from all experience, to be formidable. A drunkard does not lightly say, "I will from this day become temperate:" the profane blasphemer, "I will henceforth use no more profane language:" the dishonest, the dissipated, the covetous, the liar, "I will now alter my course." I mention these classes, as pre-eminently wicked, but every man, even with a much fairer exterior, in his train of feelings, in his heart and affections, is as truly irreligious as these classes.

Religious awakenings and fears are by no means delusion nor enthusiasm. They do but present truth and reality to the mind with their proper interest and influence. A man on his death-bed is greatly alarmed, feels strong fears, and calls for advice and prayers. Even courts of justice and legislatures, when a man is condemned, and going to execution, appoint him religious instruction; send him a clergyman to prepare him—for what? For the very same event to which every soul in this city is hastening: to prepare him for death—for the solemn trial—for eternity! Who objects to the propriety of this humane regulation? Who does not think it decorous, nay, awfully important, that a man on his death-bed should feel solemnity, anxiety, earnestness, fear—should pray, should ask prayers? His eternal state is now to be decided; he is now to stand that trial where there is no disguise; to hear that sentence from which lies no appeal.

But the thousands that swarm in this city are in that same state. They may, indeed, and some will, no doubt, live longer, and some perhaps not. Many of them will go as suddenly, far more unexpectedly, and the danger is that they will go without preparation. A dreadful infatuation reigns over mankind. The interests of the soul, its good estate, and salvation, are as much greater, more imperative, and grand, than any temporal concern,

as eternity is longer than time, as endless pains and pleasures are more important than those of a moment.

The truth is, if all the inhabitants of this city had but a correct idea of their state and prospects, they would universally feel that deep and trembling anxiety which a man feels on a death-bed, or a criminal under sentence of death. When compared with a vast and boundless futurity, every concern of life would shrink into nothing. They would feel as though the change was present; the next step and eternal scenes would open; life is past, and the dread tribunal is before them. Then, all must depend on the favour of the Almighty Judge. But have they done any thing to secure his favour or deprecate his wrath? No! The great body of them have equally neglected his favour and his wrath, have equally despised his anger and his love; have felt no regrets for sin; have never made a prayer; have seldom used the name of God but in a profane oath. And are such people fit for heaven? A glimpse of their condition would convince them that they were suited to no place but a region of sin and misery.

Then they would think of the Omniscient eye that sees them—the Almighty power that holds them. They would think what goodness had been answered with what ingratitude, what favour by what perverseness, what love with what hatred. It would occur to them that perhaps their crimes are already past forgiveness, and that divine displeasure may now be ready to cut them off. With such impressions they could for a moment entertain no resolution but that of devoting so late an hour to so important an exigence. I need not tell what they would do or say: every reflecting mind will for itself strike a general outline of the course they would take. It is the course generally pursued by persons who are the subjects of great awakenings. "Who," says Mr. Locke, "could come within the bare possibility of infinite misery" without fear and alarm? But if all the multitudes in this city, excepting the comparatively small number of truly pious, were convinced that they were not only "within the bare possibility" of endless misery, but were under sentence of the law of God, as well as hastening by their own voluntary course to that end; that it was not only possible, but

highly probable, that that would be their condition; nay, that there was no possibility of their escape but by deep repentance, and thorough reformation, but by the pardon and acceptance of God through Jesus Christ, they would feel and manifest the greatest alarm and amazement.

That this would be the case here, we may be assured from the experience of all christendom since the reformation; and, if possible, more from the experience of former years, and other countries. "There were great awakenings," says President Edwards, "in 1625, in the west of Scotland, when it was a common thing for people on hearing the word of God preached to be seized with great terror and alarm, and who became, afterwards, most solid and lively Christians. The same author informs of many in France that were so wonderfully affected with the preaching of the gospel, in the times of those famous divines, Farel and Viret, that, for a time, they could not follow their secular business." The same writer mentions similar accounts from Ireland and other places.

President Edwards also quotes a letter from his father, in which his father observes, that "it was a common thing, when the famous Mr. John Rogers was preaching, for some of his hearers even to cry out under the greatness of their alarm and terror. And by what I have heard," continues he, "I conclude it was usual for many that heard that very awakening and rousing preacher of God's word, to make a great cry in the congregation."

A religious attention, thus excited in great bodies of people, cannot be safely ascribed to any cause but the influence of the Spirit of God. The reasoning used by Christ himself, in answer to those who blasphemously ascribed his casting out devils to Beelzebub, the prince of devils, applies, at least, if not with equal force, to this case. He said, "if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; and how can his kingdom stand?" I do not say that when a village, a town, a city, or a district of people are religiously affected, that Satan is cast out; but I say that his influence is weakened, and his kingdom totters. It presents an immediate check, as far as it extends, to the exuberance of vice, to the enormity of visible wickedness. In all the stages of its progress and operation, it holds a favourable aspect

towards deep and permanent reformation. Experience will warrant the assertion, that in these general awakenings, by far the greater number of those who come forward in a public profession of religion, are found afterwards to adorn that profession, and to give evidence of its truth and sincerity. It is also known to be a fact, that the greater part of those who are the subjects of the awakening, are found eventually to give evidence of a real conversion to God.

Even those who admit regeneration to be a progressive work, and believe that the agency of the sinner is more or less concerned in it;—in whatever way men are turned from sin to holiness, and from the service of Satan to the service of God; every one who wishes to see the great work brought about in some manner or other, cannot but be glad to see a general attention to religious concerns. For if it does not take that form with which they are most pleased, it takes some form, and cannot but result in raising the standard of public morals, and in checking the torrent of vice which threatens to bear all before it, and which, in great cities, becomes rapid and resistless as a flood.

A reformation extending to every house in this city, would be the noblest sight the lover of humanity ever saw. Its indications would be strong and decisive. The reign of vice, which now regards no limit, but throws its malign influence within every enclosure, would on all sides be curtailed. The horrid clang of profaneness, the bloated features of dissipation, the haggard spectacle of prostitution, the inanity of vicious idleness, the menace of unbridled passion, deliberate revenge, curtained behind human features, and heard remote, sometimes like thunders in the bosom of darkness;—in fine, the conflicts of interest, the wiles of dishonesty, the deep-laid snares of covetousness, which now, at every step, arrest your attention, if not endanger your repose, would suddenly disappear.

What if there were even a temporary suspension of business, a circumstance I have known to attend the progress of such a work? Would that be any evidence against it? Is this world of darkness and sin so vastly important that nothing for a moment must ever interrupt man's complete and universal servi-

tude to its toils and cares, till he plunges into eternity? Must a man be the subject of sarcasm and contempt, because in the first hours of his solicitude to secure eternal felicity, in the first days of his espousal to the adorable Redeemer, he has neglected worldly pursuits? Alas! those that bring this objection, I fear, have never been informed that "the love of money is the root of all evil;" have never considered, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Christians belong to a kingdom which is not of this world; and shall they not sometimes make every thing give way to the interests, pleasures, and joys of that kingdom? Especially, whilst their interests in it are apparently insecure; whilst they are solicitously and painfully endeavouring to obtain "a name and a place" in that kingdom, shall they not consider this world's wealth and enjoyments as "lees, and dung, and dross?"

When were the people of this city known to relax their attention to business, under the powerful sway of religious impulse? Does devotion to God, and the solemn acts of worship, infringe on the days of the week; or do the schemes of amassing wealth, the delirium of incessant business, still fever their souls on the Sabbath, distract their attention, and palsy their devotions in the house of God, and surcharge their conversation in the intervals of worship? Nor yet does it all avail them: for in this perpetual and endless whirl of business, they resemble the conflict of thousands endeavouring to gain a slippery summit, where there is not room for hundreds to stand. When half way up the hill, they suddenly slide into the vale of poverty, and from thence sink to the grave.

The King of heaven himself is the dispenser of all the blessings of this life, as well as the life to come. He has said, "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed; but seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you." Accordingly, it has been actually and repeatedly observed, that those towns and villages who, seemingly, neglect their business, in times of religious awakening, have been favoured with abundance and peculiar

prosperity in those seasons. There is, indeed, the promise of God to this effect; and I assert what is known to many.

While I figure to myself all the inhabitants of this city, devoutly and earnestly attending to the most important of all concerns, I cannot but consider in what a variety of respects this would be, by far, the happiest city on the globe. The great and sudden diminution of the number of the miserable victims of vice—of criminals which throng our courts, and crowd our prisons—of invalids which fill our hospitals—of paupers in our alms-houses and aslyums—of helpless age, without provision—and infancy, without protection—of beggars patrolling the streets, whose story is, generally, but a veil to their faults; but, most of all, of that numerous banditti of thieves, robbers, swindlers, pilferers, incendiaries, burglars, and ruffians, whose concealment from the public eye alone prevents a general alarm.

The immense accumulation of human masses of the above description, in great cities, and which make incessant demands on the justice and vigilance, as well as the charity and liberality of society, become, at length, like a putrid diathesis in the human body; or, to say the least, the perpetual recurrence of these loathsome objects is one of the pests and torments of great cities. Yet the immortal souls of all these miserable people are of immense value; the reformation that should reach and recover them, would plant new stars in the firmament of glory. And how delightful the thought, that the light of truth should dispel the gloom from these dungeons, and, through such wide departments of pain and horror, should pour the healing balm of salvation.

Far above these Augean stables of sin and pain, and which no Herculean labour could cleanse, there is another department of vice in this city, but connected with the former by innumerable doors and headlong steps. This region appears brilliant and fair; its precincts resound with hilarity, feast, and song, and it contains thousands of the opulent, the fashionable, the young, and the gay. Vice is clad in splendour, and a spirit reigns here which knows no moral law but inclination, and recognises no god but pleasure. But one use is made here of Jehovah's awful name, and that is to give bravery and relish to

the idle clamours of folly—to embellish the fulminations of wit and mirth, and to give force and grandeur to the language of passion, rage, and falsehood. Is this the abode of happiness? Its chief characteristics are restless pride without gratification—ostentation without motive or reward—professions without sincerity—ceremony without comfort—laughter without joy—smiles which conceal rancour—approbation alloyed with envy, and vociferous praises dying away into the whispers of calumny.

"Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare."

What changes a work of God's spirit would cause in this numerous class; and, O! how greatly to be desired, even for the purposes of present happiness! But do you think that these gay people, on whose countenances often dwells the smile of peace—whose every step appears light and airy as the radiant footstep of Aurora—whose very form and features are luminous with contentment and hope; do you imagine they live otherwise than in a continual round of unmingled enjoyment? How false is the estimate made of human happiness! These people are as mistaken in their pursuit of pleasure as others are in judging of their felicities from their exterior.

They are strangers to happiness; and I am in no fear of contradiction. No, the immortal mind is not thus made. The glitter of dress—the splendour of apartments—the loftiness of houses—the beauty of equipage, have all the potency of their charms from the supposed admiration they excite in the eyes of spectators; and even here their vain possessors are grossly mistaken; for more than half that admiration is the most unlovely envy. The brilliance of all these things strikes the eye, but carries no pleasure to the heart; the immortal spirit within well knows they are but dust; and, in the midst of these baubles, indignantly retires within itself, and refuses to be consoled with a portion no better than what falls to the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth.

Religion is man's greatest good; it pays the most respect to his most important interests; brings the soul to the knowledge and possession of her proper enjoyments, and points her upward to her eternal inheritance. Without religion, the wealth of Crœsus cannot save a man from the deepest poverty; with it, the beggar Lazarus possesses boundless wealth, and shall be eternally blessed.

With this idea, the object before me becomes important, in no ordinary degree; and as I see crowds passing by my window, of all ages and conditions; their high destiny and immortal powers, of which they appear to be scarcely conscious, rises upon me in solemn prospect: I cannot but reflect where these persons, and all the mulitude that I see move about these streets, will be after the mighty lapse of ten thousand ages. Stupidity may laugh, and infidelity sneer, at such a suggestion, but a heathen monarch wept at the thought that all his army, the greatest ever assembled, would die in a hundred years.* And a greater than a heathen monarch wept over a city, doubtless less guilty before God than this. Yes, after the full period of ten thousand ages has rolled away, not a soul now in this city shall be extinct, or, shall fail to make one of the number destined to eternal ages of happiness or misery.

I cannot but reflect how important these days are to the thousands I see about me, perfectly unconscious of their value, because thoughtless of the great purposes to be answered by them, and of the great work to be done in them. As it is with the whole of life itself, so it is with the business of every day; they have an ulterior relation to our eternal state. I am fully aware that the effusions of the holy spirit are not at the option of men: it is not in the power of man to cause a reformation in this city. But when I consider the boundless fulness of gospel provision, the explicit and earnest invitations of the gospel: when I know that God is long suffering, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance:" when I consider how this city has been distinguished by great and special blessings of providence; shielded in war, delivered from

* Xerxes the Great.

pestilence, prospered in peace, and rising to greatness, I cannot but advert to the stupidity and wickedness, which were never more visible and triumphant than at the present time, with alarm and foreboding. And let it be called prophesying, or by any other opprobrious name, God will not suffer such blessings to be answered by such ingratitude with long impunity. There will be changes, and the sword of divine displeasure is, I fear, already drawn; in what way it will strike, or how it will fall, infinite wisdom only knows.

Be it that God's own work is in his own hands, and that he will carry it on when and where he pleases: Christians ought to know that God works by means, otherwise of what use is a gospel ministry? The almighty and ever blessed God has promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. But let any one, to whom a thought so improbable as a general reformation in this city, may occur, who may feel a desire for the salvation of this great people; let him look round him and ask, why it is that sinners are surrounded as with a wall so adamantine, so impenetrable, so impervious to conviction? Why are the impediments so numerous? Why is it so awfully improbable that we shall see a general reformation here? Why does it appear so discouraging, so hopeless, so morally impossible, as almost to paralize the conception of desire, or the secret wrestlings and agonizings of prayer? There surely is a cause, nor is that cause invisible in its operation. Religion is everywhere the same. There is "balm in Gilead, and a physician there." God is no more hostile to cities than to villages: his spirit is as free, and his offers of salvation as full, to the people of a crowded city as of the open country. Nor are the people in cities more averse to religion than in the country.

Human nature is, indeed, much the same in all places; but if there is any difference, the people of large cities have more sensibility, are certainly more alive to the finer feelings, and to the impulse of public sensations, and are more quick and susceptible to sentimental impressions. They are naturally no more wicked, no more inaccessible to conviction, no more ardent in worldly pursuits, no more insensible to the solemn

themes of evangelical truth, or to the condition and prospects of the soul, than the inhabitants of the country at large.

The difference which sinks the scale of the city to a depth so hopeless, in this comparison, is owing, in a great measure, to a difference in the means used to promote religion; in short, to a difference in what is denominated the means of grace.

If the reader will recur to the first numbers of the Triangle, first series, he will there find stated the cause to which I here allude. The strain of doctrine there described, and which has, in a measure, formed the current of opinion and tone of feeling in a very great body of people in this city, suffice it to say, has not been attended with many indications of reformation, and has, to all appearance, presented no barrier to the overwhelming flood of vice which threatens the city.

It will be easy to contradict this assertion, but not easy to show that it is not true: "*cum res ipsa loquitur*:" and I shall dismiss this subject with expressing my firm belief, that these doctrines continuing to be disseminated, enforced, and maintained in the manner and form they have been, for years past, there will be no reformation. I have no expectation that God will honour them with that mark of his approbation; and as for the merit they claim, in point of moral suasion, or the prospect of any effect they will produce in that way, I should expect as much effect from the Arabian proverbs delivered in their native tongue. They are not the doctrines of the frequent and great reformations which have been in our days, and in our country. They are not "the sword of the Spirit."

The more these doctrines prevail and gain credit, the more men are contracted by selfishness, which always brings intolerance in its train: the more noise is made about depravity, and the greater the ostentation of setting human nature low, the more is the hearer and the convert flattered in his pride and quieted in his conscience, and made to sleep, by a potent antidote, against even the thunders of truth: the more that is made of faith, the less of personal holiness, and that true moral excellence, which gives religion its beauty and heaven its felicity. So that, in leading the sinner to contemplate his own depravity, they furnish him with excuses instead of overwhelming him

with conviction; and in leading the Christian to consider the gracious promise of God, they puff him up with pride, and embolden him audaciously to demand salvation, and exhort him to "keep Christ to his word."

INVESTIGATOR.

No. V.

Among all the words which give offence to the advocates of the triangular scheme, the term Metaphysics stands foremost. They abhor it even more than they do morality, virtue, or even disinterestedness. This prejudice against some, and so many of the best words in our language, is not a mark in their favour: and especially when it is considered that their antipathy does not stop at the word itself, but goes far beyond, and aims at the very things these words are used for.

Concerning these offensive words I have said something in former numbers; but as somewhere on this ground, they have erected one of their strongest fortresses, from which they keep up a perpetual and running fire of random shot, I shall sit down before it in this number: nor do I expect to find it as impregnable as the den of Cacus. About the word *disinterested*, I think I have already discharged my duty. It is a term, and conveys an idea, well understood, in all our best writers. Addison and Johnson use it frequently in the same sense we use it. A man sees two men in a quarrel, and fiercely contending. He steps in between them, and says, "Gentlemen, I have no interest in the result of this contention; I am well disposed towards you both. Permit me, then, to act as a mediator between you." This man will be likely to have influence with both these men, because they perceive that he is entirely disinterested.

I therefore said that no word in our language was better understood, or more immoveably fixed in its true import. I have

not seen a more handsome illustration of this word than I lately read in Cox's life of Melancthon, where he sums up and finishes the character of that great man by observing, that he generally acted under the influence of a purely "disinterested benevolence." But some of our great divines would tell Cox a different story. Those men, who have eaten freely of the *Amor sui*, pretend that it is either a phrase of false import, or else of no import at all.

The word morality has not fared better. They have condemned all its family: for moral, moral agency, moral fitness, moral depravity, and the like, are all considered as Amalekites, and proscribed. Especially the phrase *moral virtue*, made up of two most offensive words, they regard as bad as the union of Herod and Pilate. The word *moral* we derive from the Latin *moralis*, which is from *mos*, a law or custom. Morality is conformity to law, and used in this sense. But has the Christian no morality? Alas! some professing Christians have not much. But what did Christ say? "Think not that I come to destroy the law," &c. He goes on to show, that he insisted on a purer mortality than even the Pharisees, who make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but what is within?—Extortion and excess. The great command of the law is love: and says the eloquent Dr. South,* "Love is not so much an affection of the Christian, as it is the very soul of the Christian; he does not so much feel it, as he is in it."

Moral virtue is a conformity to the divine law, or in other words conformity to God. For as God is love, he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. Perfect morality, therefore is perfect love to God, by which I understand perfect moral virtue. This is also sometimes called charity; and as much as St. Paul insisted on faith, he had no diminutive opinion of it." "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity."

But the principal object of this number is Metaphysics, a term, against which an odium has been excited, and by means of which incalculable mischief has been done. Before I enter

* "An old divine."

on this subject, I cannot but remark, that I consider this as one of the most extraordinary controversies ever carried on; not so much from its nature as from its means and methods. An attempt to carry measures by exciting strong prejudices against words, at the same time exaggerating and misrepresenting the notions pretended to be affixed to those words, and keeping the grand points of difference wholly out of sight: this course persisted in for years, and pursued with boldness and abundant success: I say these circumstances render this controversy, perhaps, without a parallel.

The same things, however, which render this a singular controversy, render it not a hopeless controversy: for while I am perfectly assured that it results from misinformation, in very great numbers, I am assured, with a certainty nearly equal, that they want nothing but a right understanding of the case to come into, and adopt the truth. Whatever pride of character may do with a few men, with whom it may far outweigh the solemn dictates of conscience, the great body of the people have no motive, I might almost say, no *selfish* motive for preferring error to truth. And I am well assured that, at least, some may be convinced that their credulity has been imposed upon, and that they have been deceived. They may be convinced that error has held an ascendency over truth, not by argument, but by efforts of influence from men riding on the shoulders of public confidence.

The case now to be mentioned is one of a most extraordinary nature. I appeal to the people of this city at large, that they have been led into the habit of believing that metaphysics have no connexion with religion:—that every thing metaphysical is improper and unbecoming the pulpit, or a gospel sermon: and that the Hopkinsians have little else but metaphysics in their sermons. They are very different from the good old woman I once heard of, who, hearing her minister, in whom she had great confidence, say something about metaphysics, replied, "O yes, I know that Christ is both *meat* and *physic* for the poor sinner." They do not, however, think quite so well about metaphysics, as to think it is both meat and physic for

the sinner, although quite as much mistaken with regard to what metaphysics are.

1. "Metaphysics, or ontology," says Johnson, "is the science which treats of the affections of being in general." In strictness, the whole of truth may be said to be divided into physical and metaphysical; and to say the least, many of the doctrines of religion come properly and strictly within the department of metaphysics. The term affection, as used in the above definition, is taken in its larger sense, and in relation both to action and passion. "By the affections of being," says Dr. Watts, "are meant all powers, properties, accidents, relations, actions, passions, dispositions, internal qualities, external adjuncts, considerations, conditions, or circumstances whatsoever." (See vol. 5. p. 639.)

As it is one object of this number to do away the prejudice and opposition in many minds against metaphysics, by showing to those who have not the advantage of general reading what metaphysics truly are; and, as I have this moment before me the Belgic Encyclopedia, published in the year 1620, and dedicated to the lords of the Belgic League, and also Dr. Watts' System of Metaphysics, I think it will be useful to lay before the reader a compendious view of the subjects of which that science treats. If the reader will keep in mind that it is not Edwards nor Hopkins, and if he has not regularly studied metaphysics, I presume he will not think his labour lost in perusing this sketch.

Metaphysics, or ontology, treats of being, of essence, or nature, of mode and form; of existence, whether actual or possible, necessary or contingent, dependent or independent, whence arises the distinction between the being of God and of his creatures. In the next place, it considers duration, creation, and preservation; and, reader, is all this chaff and nonsense? It then considers unity and union; but what doctrines are involved here? It treats of act and power, of action and passiveness, of necessity and liberty, and of relative affections; but is all this nothing? This, reader, was the ground which the immortal Edwards cleared of as many dangerous errors, as Hercules did the wilderness of monsters. It treats of truth, goodness

a little breath, let me further observe, I am fully aware of the difference between the consideration of the affections of being regarded abstractly and in themselves, or in their concrete form when considered in conduct and character. In this latter state, they give rise to minor distinctions. Thus says Dr. Watts, "when they relate to kings, subjects, laws, rebellions, allegiance, treason, &c., they are called political; when they relate to God, holiness, christianity, repentance, gospel, and salvation, they are denominated theological;" but they still belong to the far more comprehensive class, metaphysical.

A discourse or discussion on the affections of beings, considered abstractly, in which their nature, principles, operations, and laws, are professedly set forth, may be styled a discourse on metaphysics, or ontology; but a religious essay, or sermon, or body of divinity, in which metaphysical truths and reasonings are employed, is, nevertheless, denominated theology. But what havoc a theologian will make, who has no correct knowledge of metaphysics, daily experience shows us; and two volumes of sermons, lately published in this city, would form an incomparable book of reference: of which I will hereafter give some specimens.

3. From the character of God, the nature of his government; from the character, duty, and obligations of men; from the commands, threatenings, and expostulations of scripture, and from similar sources found in sacred writ, may be deduced the opinions which the ablest and most judicious metaphysicians have advanced concerning the powers and faculties of the soul. Yet, as I said, the spirit of truth did not instruct men how to name and classify them, nor with what other sciences to give them a place. But, notwithstanding these advantages, numerous errors, and some of them the most dangerous and fatal, have ever infested the Christian Church. Some of these errors arose during the apostolic age: they have been varying their form and influence, and maintained their ground through the German reformation.

To them, in a great measure, are owing much of the mysticism and absurdity, conveyed down from age to age, about original sin, which term Calvin himself acknowledges is not in the

scriptures, but was invented by Augustine. Some have denied the spirituality of the soul: others have asserted it to be a particle or emanation of the Deity, and, of course, incapable of moral stain, or final misery. Some have denied its immortality altogether; and others have supposed it to sleep in the grave with the body till the resurrection. Some have maintained, that all the souls of the human race were made at once, and are kept somewhere till bodies are ready to receive them: and others, that the souls of the human race are one of the inferior orders of æons, or angels that fell, who are thrown into a state of forgetfulness, and sent into bodies prepared for them, in order to a second probation; and it must be confessed that much of human conduct favours that idea.

To this mass of opinions concerning the soul, may be added, that some think that there is no such thing as freedom or moral agency among creatures; that they are all like so many machines, or automata, moved entirely by superior agency. Others, and they are not much more consistent, believe, that, since the fall, men are free to do wrong and not to do right. But Bible metaphysics teach, that sinful creatures are, in all respects, as free as holy ones. It is sufficient to render an action accountable, to know that it was voluntary. A holy creature oves to do right, as well as a sinful one does to do wrong. We hear none of this metaphysical jargon before courts of justice, when a man is convicted of a crime. We never hear it urged that he did it because he was not a moral agent to do right.

If the reader will turn back to the contrast of sentiment, at the commencement of the third number, he will perceive that the true origin of nearly all the difference, arises from false metaphysics. Nor do I think, that even the notion of limited atonement is altogether independent of that prolific source of error, as I shall hereafter show.

Nothing can be more alarming, nothing more ominous to the friends of truth, or more hostile to the great doctrines of the Gospel, than the efforts of many to banish metaphysics from theology, and render them disgusting. Artful and designing men know the efficacy of this practice. In the first place, they

infuse into the minds of the mass of people, that metaphysics are sometimes odious and foreign to religion: that any thing metaphysical is not preaching Christ. They then go on to extend and deepen this prejudice. Any thing argumentative, any train of close reasoning, however demonstrative, however conducted in the strong light of intuitive evidence, it is no matter, they have but one sentence to pronounce, they can refute it all in a moment. They need only say, "Ah! this metaphysical reasoning is not the Gospel." And to the mind duly prepared by prejudice, and ignorant of the nature of metaphysics, it is all answered and refuted. There are books now in this city, there is Edwards on the Will, in which the grounds taken are as demonstrably and unanswerably maintained as any argument found in Euclid: and many of these anti-metaphysical declaimers, when in companies where they are ashamed to say otherwise, will freely own it: yet the same arguments which Edwards uses, when used by others, these same men, when in other companies, will refute in a moment,—"Ah! it is all metaphysical jargon! It is not preaching Christ!" Thus they have found out a way in which they can easily confront the eloquence of Whitefield, or the argument of Warburton. They have only to say to their infatuated admirers, "It is too metaphysical; this is not the Gospel;" and the work is done.

But the worst evil, and that which will increase it in a geometrical ratio, is still untouched. This abhorrence and proscription of metaphysics, is spreading into a much wider circle. Young men, educated for the ministry, are carefully imbued in this *aqua turbida*, and they will soon cast up *mire* and *dirt* enough, in their sermons. Instead of reading Locke and Edwards, which, either with or without teaching, they will be made to abhor, they are kept for months or years poring over rusty folios of modern Latin, whose very style might either cause or cure a Tertian ague; and which, if put into an alembic, till all their crude notions and common places had passed over, would come out a moderate duodecimo of excellent matter.

From these lovely folios, they must next trudge through the Herculean labour of copying, perhaps, Dr. "Verbiage's" vapid,

manuscript lectures on moral philosophy, or something else, a task as useful as to set them to see how many times a day they could throw the same stick of wood out of the third story window ; and, at any rate, it keeps them as clear of any correct notions of metaphysics : whether it keeps them as clear of error, is another question. When these young men come before the public, you will soon hear about "imputed guilt"—natural inability—moral agency *to do wrong*—limited atonement—permissive decrees—faith the sum of religion,* &c. &c.

4. I am perfectly aware of the task I encounter by taking this ground, and coming out in such plain language : I have counted the cost, and am prepared to meet the consequences. I have been long a spectator on this ground, and have marked, with undescribable emotions, the progress of this whole business ; and it is not a hasty resolution that I have taken to lay it before the public. When I hear one with an easy, nay, careless slang, explode the truths of God, and the dictates of his everlasting gospel under the slur of metaphysics—when I hear metaphysics themselves branded as error or nonsense, by many who are grossly ignorant of what they are, and by others, who, if they are ignorant, are wilfully and criminally so—when I know they do it to answer a purpose so fatal in its nature and consequences, I cannot be silent.

But there is one point of view in which this subject has not been brought before the public, and with which I shall close this number, together with this series. These professed adversaries of metaphysics resort to them as often as Edwards, or Hopkins, or any of their admirers and followers do. And, perhaps, it is owing to the wretched work they make with them that they are ashamed of the term, and wish to whelm it under disgrace and darknesss. I shall give a few instances.

The public knows the uproar that is raised against the Hopkinsians, for holding that the divine agency was concerned in the origin of evil. But have these humble, modest, unassuming people, no ideas about that point? What says their STANDARD? their almost inspired assembly of divines, in their catechism?—

* See Romeyn's Sermons, vol. 1. p. 69, at top.

their assembly of divines, on whose incomparable skill and profundity they lay such stress? "*The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, whereby, for his own glory, he foreordains whatsoever comes to pass.*" And the apostle Paul, no doubt, bears them out in this declaration; for he declares, that God "works all things after the counsels of his own will." Now, according to the assembly, sin was foreordained, for it has surely *come to pass*. "O, no, that is metaphysics!" Any reasonable mind may perceive, that nothing can destroy the connexion between the actions of a creature, and the agency of an infinitely wise and powerful Creator, who made him, and constituted his powers and faculties. "O, no, that is metaphysics!" Admit that a creature acts freely, God ordained and decreed that he should act freely, and his acting one way no more frustrates the decree than his acting another. "O, no, that is metaphysics!" God's decree no more impairs the accountableness or moral quality of a sinful than a holy action. "O, no, that is metaphysics!" The scripture declares that God decreed some wicked actions; and if so why not all? "O, no, that is metaphysics!" Sin was either decreed, or it was not decreed. "O, no, that is metaphysics!" If it was decreed, and the divine agency noways concerned in bringing it to pass, then Paul was mistaken, for God does not work all things after the counsels of his own will, but, on the contrary, he works many things after the counsels of some other being. "O, no, that is too metaphysical.!"

But let us see how they talk about this matter. They say, that sin was merely the fruit of the free agency of a creature. And, so, I answer, is every other act of his, when his will is not inclined by superior power. But who is the author of that free-agency? "O, that is metaphysics again!" But their metaphysics will fairly make out that neither the purposes, nor the agency of God, is at all concerned with the free actions of creatures, and will effectually overturn the doctrine of decrees, and establish, not Arminianism, but some *ism* far beyond it: will not only destroy all true metaphysics, but contradict a multitude of passages of scripture.

Some have set up, and dwelt upon the idea, that it has been better, on the whole, for God's kingdom, that sin has taken

place. I mention this, however, not as any distinguishing sentiment of the Hopkinsians, but merely as an opinion which some of them have advanced. Against this, an outcry has been made, and a "strange horror" excited, because it is metaphysical. And, reader, I appeal to any man's understanding, whether this is not a reasonable, and almost a self-evident, supposition. If the assembly of divines are correct, and if God has "for his own glory foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," which is as metaphysical a proposition as ever was in print, then surely he foreordained sin, because he saw it would be for his glory.

And what have been the consequences of the existence of sin? I answer, the infinitely glorious work of redemption; the union of the divine and human natures; the most glorious manifestation of God to his moral kingdom, through Jesus Christ. This is metaphysical; but is it therefore incorrect?

Let us see by what kind of metaphysics this is refuted. A great Docter comes forward and asserts, that it is not proper to say that the whole plan of divine administration is the best possible; for we do not know but that God might have made a different plan equally good, or perhaps better. If God is good, that goodness would lead him to prefer a good plan to a bad one; and equally so, to prefer a greater to a smaller degree of good: but if his goodness be equal to his power, and both are infinite, then the same goodness which would lead him to prefer a greater to a less degree of good, would lead him to prefer the greatest possible degree of good in his entire plan. As to alterations or differences, we are compelled to believe that the divine scheme, as it is, was preferred to all others, for such reasons as infinite wisdom approved. Our ignorance furnishes no more objection to saying that God's plan is the best possible than it is to our saying that it is a good plan. To say, therefore, that it would have been as well or better for God's kingdom, if sin had never taken place, is an impeachment of the wisdom and goodness of God.

What kind of metaphysics are brought against the doctrine of *moral inability?* Why, they say that a sinner is not a moral

mean to say that the great and general principles of religion and natural philosophy are connected, and incorporated with the results of the principles of mathemetics, and that it is not possible for a person whose opinions on the principles of mathematics and their results are definite and unwavering, to conceal or dissemble his views or feelings about politics? All this might be understood, for his grand proposition is, that *great and general principles are closely connected:* which is of the highest kind of *universals*, rendered so by the removal of all notes of particularity, as logicians tell us. But if great and general principles are connected, then the great and general principles of religion and natural philosophy are connected, and so are those of law and physic. But his second proposition is more extraordinary; for he says, that great and general principles are incorporated with the results of *these* principles: with a different *usque ad*, he seems here to mean certain principles he had in his eye, but leaves to conjecture what; therefore, I substitute mathematics, and it will stand thus: "The great and general principles of religion and natural philosophy are connected and incorporated with the results of the principles of the mathematics." His third proposition is a consequence, viz. "Therefore, it is not possible for a person whose opinions on these principles and results are definite and unwavering to conceal or dissemble his views or feelings." But, reader, does fixedness of opinion, concerning any principles and results, offer any apology for repetition, or render concealment or dissembling impossible?

The reader may repress his surprise that I dwell on this matter, for certainly if Stephens, or Bentley, or Scaliger, might give a column on a word in Virgil, I may speculate a little on half a page of this preface, "quod, sine dubio, fuit elaboratum industria, et prefectum ingenio." And I shall make bold to offer this as a specimen of the metaphysics of these people. Now, reader, this whole argument is false. Its premises are not true, and, if they were, the conclusion does not follow: and, if it did, it does not answer the purpose intended by it. In the first place, "great and general principles are not necessarily, nor generally, connected," for, if they are, the construction I

have given above is correct. They may be found in the same subject, but are perfectly distinct and independent. In the second place, they are not incorporated with the results of each other, nor with their own results. These words, so connected, make a flourish, but mean nothing. But in the third place: If it be admitted that all general principles are connected, and their results, *vice versa*, incorporated together, (a most horrid idea!) and if also admitted, that a man is definite and unwavering in his opinion about them, that is no reason or apology for a repetition of the same thought, much less for not concealing or dissembling his opinions.

How much better would have been the author's apology for a perpetual recurrence of a few ideas, had he said, "The man who moves in a triangle has but three short lines to trace, and three corners to turn?" "O ye Corinthians, ye are straitened in your own bowels!"

INVESTIGATOR.

No. VI.

I HAVE before me the Pastoral Letter of the Synod of Philadelphia, dated Lancester, September 20th, 1816, of which I give the first paragraph.

"CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

"The Synod assembled in Lancester, at the present time, consists of a greater number of members than have been convened at any meeting for many years; and from their free conversation on the state of religion, it appears, that all the Presbyteries are more than commonly alive to the importance of contending earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints, and of resisting the introduction of Arian, Socinian, Arminian, and Hopkinsian heresies; which are some of the means by which the enemy of souls would, if possible, deceive the very elect."

The third paragraph runs thus: "May the time never come, in which our ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS shall determine that Hopkinsianism and the doctrines of our confession of faith are the same thing; or that men are less exposed now, than in the days of the apostles, to the danger of perverting the right ways of the Lord."

People of the union, hear this, and feel what gratitude you owe to a good Providence, which shields your religious rights from the persecuting fury of bigotry and intolerance. The tocsin is now blown, and while Truth grasps her sword, and Charity veils her face, let Vigilance light her lamp, and stand at her threshold.

I had closed this series, and sent it to the press, but this extraordinary letter merits immediate consideration. Shall I dip my pen in ridicule, and expose this transaction in the mock robe it merits? Alas! this cloud of darkness throws every object under a shade too mournful to admit of using the livelier colours.

Do we, then, in this Pastoral Letter, hear the voice and the sentiments of the fathers of the church, the central section of the General Assembly—that august body reared by divine grace, in this free and happy country, and by the special blessing of God grown to a size so majestic, in a time so comparatively short? That Assembly, now spreading its branches to the east and west, to the north and to the south, with the prospect of a boundary that may still expand for ages?

Where are the great and benevolent founders of these Synods, and of this Assembly? Has the angel of heavenly love, and charity, and peace, together with them, taken her flight for ever? Ye spirits of Davies, and Witherspoon, and Finley, of Rodgers and M'Whorter, under whose mild and harmonizing influence this tree was planted, unless removed from all knowledge of its prospects and dangers—from all sympathy with this region of sin and death, can you behold a devouring flame kindled in its central boughs, and not feel a momentary thrill of anxiety?

I cannot but indulge in reflections like these, when I advert to the character, the temper, the spirit, the wisdom of the men, who, under God, were the founders of these religious institutions. I mention these men, not because they were the only

men concerned in that great and benevolent work; there were many others equally engaged, and perhaps some equally useful.

The reader will now perceive the justice of the remarks made in the former series, concerning the opposition made to the strain of doctrine called Hopkinsian. In this number I shall call his attention to a few remarks on this Pastoral Letter of the Synod of Philadelphia.

1. It is impossible not to perceive that Hopkinsianism is the grand error aimed at in that letter. They declare in the same letter that there never was but one Socinian Society within the bounds of the Synod, and it could not be thought necessary to send a circular letter to all the congregations in the Synod, and, in fact, to all the continent, on account of one Antitrinitarian Society. An act so official and formal, for a single congregation, and that, perhaps, a very small one, would scarcely appear decorous. As to Arianism, it is doubtful whether they have an individual of that heresy in all their bounds. They certainly have not a congregation of that order.

Nor did I ever know till now, nor was there ever a solitary instance, as I have heard, of any public body, in the United States, publishing a formal denunciation of Arminianism as heresy. The term Arminian is variously used and understood, and is applied to various shades of difference, from Arminius, the founder of the sect. Few, if any, of the protestant churches have chosen to censure Arminianism as a damnable heresy; and it has never been done, before the present instance, in this country.

The Philadelphia Synod seem to have forgotten that very large and respectable bodies of Christians, in our own country, such as the Episcopalians, Methodists, and several others, are usually denominated Arminians. All these they have condemned, in the severest and strongest terms, as heretics; have held them up to public odium and abhorrence. Whatever that Synod may think, I cannot but esteem them Christian churches, comprising many members of great piety, and having many divines of distinguished eminence. It has pleased God to make the church of England, or the nation professing that faith, the grand barrier of the Protestant cause in Christendom

for ages past, and many of their divines are among the brightest ornaments of the church of Christ; God forbid that I should call them, or think them, heretics.

2. Had this language been held in some anonymous publication; had it appeared in the writings of some individual, as his own private opinion; had it appeared in a public journal; had it been delivered in a sermon from the desk, the individual might have been thought overheated in his zeal, and carried beyond the bounds of his own cool reason. But what is it? In what form does it meet our eye? It is the act of a great number; the act of professed ministers of Christ and ambassadors of God; it is the act of an ecclesiastical court, the central Synod of the union; it is in the nature of a law, or rule, and set as a precedent for all other ecclesiastical courts, and for all future time.

3. It condemns, at one stroke, an immense body of Christians in New-England, where, it is well known, this strain of sentiment prevails almost universally, and that whole body, in its various sections, are amicably represented in the general assembly; and their representatives, from year to year, set on the same seats by the side of members of this Synod. Moreover, the assembly is, also, represented in the various conventions, or associations, of the New-England churches, whenever they assemble. But this would be a small consideration in comparison with another: Many ministers and churches, who actually belong to the general assembly, perhaps one third, *perhaps one half*, are full in this strain of doctrine, and are condemned as heretics by this pastoral letter.

4. The sentiments usually denominated Hopkinsian were never considered as heresy by the founders of the Presbyterian church in America, nor by the wisest and ablest divines who differed with them, in any subsequent period, in Europe or America. Nothing was ever further from their thoughts than any idea of making them at all a breaking point in church communion and fellowship. Candidates for the ministry were never impeded in their progress, or censured for holding them. Ordination, or licensure, was never refused to a man who professed them, nor was any bar laid in the way of his acceding to any vacant church which had given him a call. Names, suf-

ficient to fill this paper, are now in my recollection of ministers and licentiates coming from New-England, and settling within the bounds of the general assembly, who are full in these sentiments; and of ministers and licentiates going from the bounds of the general assembly, to settle in the congregational churches of New-England. No test, abjuration, or oath of purgation, has ever been imposed or taken in either case; no dark suspicions or jealousies; no whisperings or calumnies resorted to in the general operation of these removals in this wide extent of country. The trustees of Princeton College did not start and shudder with horror at Jonathan Edwards when they called him to the high and honourable station of president, although the *heresies* of his sentiments had been long promulgated and known. But I shall not descend to names, otherwise I might introduce a list of great length and equal respectability, which might have cooled this fervid ebullition of ecclesiastical censure and proscription.

5. The measures taken by the Synod of Philadelphia are pregnant with mischief, misery, and ruin; and, all circumstances considered, I question whether the annals of the Christian Church afford a greater instance of rashness, imprudence, impolicy, or injustice. Do they, indeed, imagine that this watchword will be taken from them, and that all the Synods in this connection will ring with this dreadful denunciation, "HERESY, *and the means by which, if it were possible, the enemy of souls would deceive the very elect?*" What are we to expect next, provided this Synod act in character with their sentence and injunction? What is the rule of the everlasting gospel? "A heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." What is to be the regular operation of this business, provided all who differ from Hopkinsianism shall condemn it as heresy? Individual members are to be hurled out of churches; churches are to be rent with disputes and divisions, and some of them severed from Presbyteries; Presbyteries are to be turned out of Synods, and Synods divided; and, by this time, what becomes of the Assembly itself? Its full orb will wane, and present a fading and sickly crescent; "will become a proverb and by-word, a reproach and astonishment" to all mankind.

And what impression will this measure make on the public mind? How will it appear to this young and rising nation, whose struggles for her own independence and freedom are not yet forgotten? How will it strike at the feelings of the great and highly respectable fraternity of the Episcopal institution, who are carelessly anathematized as heretics, merely for a handsome pretext to lengthen out the rod over their shoulders to reach others? For it is not to be doubted that that form of speech, "Arians, Socinians, Arminians," &c., was resorted to merely to make the bundle of heretics as huge as possible, that, by a kind of indiscrimination, the censure, the single censure on the heads of the Hopkinsians might not seem solitary and partial; in short, that it might appear one sweeping stroke at all heresy.

But I asked, in a former paragraph, whether we were to understand this as the voice and sentiment of the fathers and counsellors of the Presbyterian church. I rejoice to say, for the honour of my country, and for the religion I profess, that nothing is farther from it. I recognise, in this act, the features of some fierce and furious spirits, who, in an inauspicious hour of darkness and incaution, gained so much the ascendant in that body as to procure this abortion of a *Bull*, who has faintly roared once, and will never be heard again. I have no doubt that its authors, ere this, do, even in their closets, shudder before the bar of public sentiment; that they, severally and individually, wish that, at that moment, they had been a day's journey from that Synod, and employed in a manner, if it would not promote, that would not endanger the prosperity and existence of the church.

INVESTIGATOR.

DEDICATION

TO THE THIRD SERIES.

TO THE LEARNED, AND LONG-LIVED,

JOHN DOE AND RICHARD ROE, Esquires.

Gentlemen,

It is well known that every artist and handicrafts-man is desirous of having his work approved, both as a source of emolument and reputation. This principle operates, probably, with greater force on the minds of authors than any other class of men. For, aside either of profit or reputation, with which most writers have little to do, there is a great pleasure in knowing, that we have power to engage the attention of gentlemen of learning and leisure, or ladies of beauty and fortune, even though they may dislike our productions. To know that our works circulate through the finest parlours, where the pictures of heroes and princes, nobles and beauties, may gaze silently upon them;—to know that they sometimes repose on the marble, beneath mirrors of the greatest value and purest reflection, by which their number is doubled, or on the purple sofa with the lap-dog, whence they may be lifted with the fairest hand, and their titles read, though their leaves are never turned over, or, perhaps, on the elegant piano, mingled with leaves of musick, where, had they but ears, they might hear strains sweeter than the harp of Orpheus, or the melting voice of Sappho; and thence come to their long quietus, behind the folding glasses of the book-case, where they enjoy perpetual and dignified repose, till, overhaled by executors, the ministers of the dead, and, perhaps, go thence to auction; this, I say, Gentlemen, is food to the innocent and noble ambition of writers. And even at the auction, honour still pursues them: for, perhaps, the auctioneer holds up a book, and says to the admiring rabble, "Here, Gentlemen, here is a book from the select library of Lord Mumble: see it—the leaves are as bright as though they had never seen the sun." And, perhaps, Jack Fribble bids it off, and, without tarnishing its pure

pages by one exposure to the inclement air, it goes to another respite of thirty years.

Such views and feelings we have, Gentlemen, and I beg you to excuse the plain concession of one who is ne'er the less sincere for not having studied the *molia tempora fandi*. But we have still sublimer hopes than these: When a book goes from our hands, we naturally look forward, till, wrapped in future vision, we fancy it, at length, to have escaped the ravages of time—to have survived more generations than the Pylean sage—to have overlived removals, revolutions, wars, fires, floods, and worms, till its lacerated covers, yellow paper, perforated leaves, and rounded angles, no less than its antique orthography and obsolete style, declare it full three hundred years old. Then we know it becomes invaluable, of course, especially, if age has rendered it illegible. It then is purchased by Dr. Flummery, a descendant of the present family of that name, which I know will never become extinct, and is worthy of scholiasts, readings, glossaries, and *notæ variorum*. I shall say nothing of succeeding and splendid editions; it is among the *old authors*, and that is sufficient. Thus, again, it goes on, rising from dust and ashes, like a Phœnix, once or twice in six hundred years, and triumphing over every thing, till it swells the flame of the last conflagration. Animated by such prospects, no wonder men are willing to write in a garret, dine on a crust, direct their pen by the light of vellum, and sleep on a pallet of straw.

I have mentioned these things, Gentleman, that you may perceive I am no stranger to the feelings of an author. *Sed nunc ad propositum:* You are to know, that the Triangle has had a tolerable circulation in this country; but the grand desideratum is to get it beyond the Atlantic, and to have it read, if possible, in England. Whether it is because books cannot move against the sun, I do not know, but few of our books perform transatlantic journeys. As I have no great faith in the subject I have chosen, to give it an interest in distant countries, nor have I full confidence in the execution of the work to accomplish that end, I must rely on a dedication, as many others have done, to carry the book where, otherwise, it would probably never go. And when you understand these to be among my motives for selecting you, I presume you will justify my conduct, and accept the offering humbly laid at your feet.

I beg permission to dedicate to you, Gentlemen, from the grand consideration of your amazing longevity, which, though it has never occurred to any one before, (and I admire that it has not,) will be considered by every reader as a proper motive. Your career began before the reigns of the Henrys and Edwards; and you witnessed the conflicts between the red and white rose; you lived through the Republic and the storms raised by Cromwell; you witnessed the calamities of the inauspi-

cious house of Stuart—saw the Restoration—the Revolution—and have known the times ever since. You saw and heard all the controversies of Papist and Protestant, Episcopalian and Presbyterian, Roundheads, Independents, Covenanters, Puritans, Friends, &c. You witnessed the agitations and intrigues of the Ryehouse plot; saw the fall of Sydney and Russell; the bigotry and folly of the second James, and the vices and vagaries of the second Charles; the feverish greatness and doubtful glory of William, and the uncertain, inconsistent, and anxious administration of Anne. You must have frequented the courts adorned and dignified by the presence of Bacon, Hale, Coke, Mansfield, and Blackstone. You have often stood by when the elder Pitt thundered in the ear of the nation, and, you saw the conflict of talents and stupidity, of corruption and integrity, of pride and folly, when the British empire was severed, and our country declared independent.

With such experience, Gentlemen, as you have had, and such observation as you must have made, what may I not expect? I have frequently alluded to the times of the Reformation; you lived through all those times, and no doubt, could write a history that would instruct, if not surprise, the world. To you I confidently, and may safely, appeal for the correctness of my declarations and statements.

To almost antediluvian longevity you add an unimpeached, and, of course, an unimpeachable reputation. Though you have been the constant attendants of the grandest courts of justice for many centuries, without ever absenting yourselves on any occasion, your names are always pronounced with respect and gravity, both in doors and out, by the bench, bar, clients, and spectators: a felicity which never fell to the lot of any other men. This singular felicity you derive from your impartiality, which is as far beyond all comparison, as are your longevity and reputation. Your sole object is to guard the liberties and repose of honest men against the rash and litigious; to see that suits, which are legally commenced, should be duly prosecuted, and not to suffer a man to harrass his neighbour awhile, and then skulk in silence behind the curtain. Of course, there would have been a peculiar propriety in dedicating every part of this work to you.

But, Gentlemen, that trait which I especially admire in your characters, is that independence of mind which never has forsaken you in the worst of times, when tyrants frowned and threatened, nor in the softest and most luxurious, when dissipation allures the brave, and flattery circumvents the wise. Even when the stern Henry sent the lovely and virtuous Ann Boleyn to the block, and the worthy, but too yielding, Cranmer to the flames, you stood your ground, and felt no fear; when the bloody Mary illuminated England with the flames of martyrs; when the perjured and horrid Jeffries rendered the circuit of his court like the path of the destroying angel, you, Gentlemen never deviated from the path of jus-

tice, and no one impeached your conduct, entertained a suspicion of your integrity, or a thought prejudicial to your welfare.

As you have never swerved in storms of despotic fury or republican ferocity; as papal pride, episcopal power, independent arrogance, and libertine licentiousness, could never affect you; as you are always the same in the calm of peace and rage of war, the quietude of establishment and whirl of revolution, the night of anarchy and the noon of order, it is to such men as you I may safely look to patronize my work.

I have duly considered, Gentlemen, that you are not lawyers, though that class certainly excels all others in point of eloquence; and a real orator cannot be a bigot, though many of them are no incompetent judges of theological opinions and doctrines: yet, they are generally engaged in professional business, and have not leisure to divide their attention, or bestow their patronage on any side of a religous controversy. And I heartily wish that a less number of them were like Gallio, "who cared for none of these things." I am likewise consoled by the consideration that you are not popular men: "For," says Sir William Temple, "come not too near to a man studying to rise in popular favour unless you can aid him in his grand object, lest you meet with a repulse." There may be, indeed, contrived a reciprocity of interest and obligation, and then you can advance with the proper overture, "*Titilla me et titillabo te;*"* then it will do. But you, Gentlemen, are in pursuit of no man's favour, suffrage, influence, or patronage. You have seen, from the raised platform of solid reputation, numerous generations of ambitious men grasping for dominion, disappear, like insects swept into the lake, by the sudden wing of the tempest, while yourselves remain unmoved.

Moreover, you are not authors—from whom an author as rarely gets patronage as a hungry man does food from ravens; for, says Johnson, few things can be published, however exalted or mean, however contemptible or meritorious, however great or little, from which an author will not fancy some obstruction in some channel of his fame, some diminution of the splendour of his reputation. The public mind cannot be more than occupied, and, as each author hopes to seize a hemisphere at least, and some more, as you see, every new candidate for notice and applause must take, perhaps, a share from those that occupied it before; and great authors act on one another like the disturbing influences of the planets on the centre of gravity, by which it is often caused to vacillate. Well it is that some of them do not drag it beyond the orbit of Saturn. But you, Gentlemen, are no authors, *homines viventes estis*—and living men are you likely to remain. You have none of these low prejudices and selfish fears. You do not say of one excellent book, it is very well, but the author was a plagiarist; of another, it is dull and tedious, and not worth reading;

* Tickle me, and I'll tickle you.

of a third, it is written with ability, but the sentiments are false; of a fourth, the author meant well, but his subject was badly handled: and so on to the hundredth, with a *but* to every one of them. Not but that there may, indeed, be such *buts* in reality, for most human things have a *but;* but all these *buts* of authors, are generally expounded by one, viz., *but* I am an author, which may properly be called the author's *but.*

Equal cause have I to rejoice, that you are not princes or nobles; in which case, among numerous candidates of patronage and favour, I should have cause to fear that one so obscure and remote might be overlooked, or, perhaps, easily outbid by skilful flattery, or, perhaps, by arguments more shining and solid, and motives addressed more home to the heart. Yet, when it is considered that any man of wealth has substantially the same ability to patronise books and literature that princes have, and, perhaps, fewer demands on their liberality in proportion to their ability, it is not to be doubted that a full share of princes have been patrons of learning.

I scarcely need say, that you, Gentlemen, are not clergymen, otherwise there would have been the greatest temerity and presumption in this dedication. Had you been clergymen, and upon a careful enumeration of your sides and angles had found them to be six, instead of threatening to prosecute the Investigator, as some clergymen, after counting up, have done, you would, perhaps, have done what would have been much worse—you would have taken *no notice of it.* It is with clergymen as with all other classes of men; some of them are very good men, and some are *quite the other way,* as you, in a life of several hundred years, must doubtless have observed. The good clergymen, which I hope, in some countries, bear some respectable proportion to the whole number, in a degree resemble the elect; they are mingled with a numerous class, from which no mortal eye can certainly distinguish them. Few men are viler in the sight of heaven, or more full of mischief among men, than an impious clergyman; and none have done more to obstruct the progress of truth, and the interests of religion, than this ill-fated class. They derive their extraordinary power, to this end, from their successful endeavours to establish a high reputation for piety and zeal: and you, Gentlemen, no doubt, will remember the time when Bonner and Gardner were gazed at and adored, by a deluded multitude, as saints next in holiness to the apostles—nay, when Alexander the Sixth and Cæsar Borgia were thought still much greater and better, perhaps, than even the ordinary apostles.

You will not understand, Gentlemen, that I mean to fix an equal indiscriminate censure on all triangular men. I am far from such thoughts or feelings. But that some among them are wholly given to pride, ambition, intrigue, and wickedness, I have not a doubt. And if they will read these pages they will proba-

bly find a more faithful monitor, and a truer portrait, than will again meet their eyes till they stand at the bar of God.

I am not insensible that many clergyman are among the noblest patrons, promoters, and proficients, in elegant literature and the arts. But, perhaps, with an individual exception, as far as relates to this city, these men are not found amongst the *Trigonoi*, a name by which I sometimes distinguish them. For, Gentlemen, their scheme is so intolerably narrow, so frozen and so dark, that the mind which puts it on is immediately and terribly shrunk from its ordinary size, however small or great it might have been before. For the soul seems to bear some resemblance to the ethereal element; it has an elastic spring, and is capable of great compression; and, perhaps, on that account, the ancients called them by the same name. A principal feature of the scheme of these teachers is, that the understandings of men are as much depraved by sin as the heart or the will. They have never exhibited but one argument which seems difficult to answer; and whether that is "*argumentum ad hominem*," or not, I shall leave you to judge; it arises not from what they *say*, but from what they *are*. They show such darkness of understanding, that all the dictates of charity and mercy loudly plead in their behalf that it might, if possible, be ascribed to some other than voluntary causes.

I have only to apprize you of one fact, Gentlemen, and I shall close. It has not been, either will it be, the object of this work, in any stage of it, either present, past, or to come, to enter into theological discussions, or controversies, properly so called: on this account regular details of argument have been avoided; besides, that the writer is well aware, that whenever people are disposed to read for the sake of examining arguments, books, at hand, are not wanting in which these points are professedly argued and unanswerably demonstrated. I have perceived, with inexpressible regret, the people of a great and flourishing, a free and enlightened city, not only deprived of the means of information, but sinking continually deeper into the absurd and gloomy prejudices which covered the eyes of men three hundred years ago. This object is effected by art and intrigue, by vague surmises and absurd rumours, by public declamations and ecclesiastical censures. The public, though somewhat of an unwieldy body, and composed of crude materials, will ultimately judge correctly, when furnished with the means.

Let the history of this business be stripped of its covering, and its enormity will quickly appear. It cannot be for the interest of mankind to be deceived: the interest of the soul, and the concerns of religion, are too vast to be sacrificed, as any one may see, to the pride and ambition of a reptile whose infamy and misery will be proportioned to his success, and will afford but a wretched consolation for the multitudes who have been seduced by his wiles.

As you, Gentlemen, have long personated the eye of public Justice, you can have no prejudice, and can desire nothing but that truth should prevail. The truth, which had made some progress in this city, has been attacked by various means, and by violent measures. While the adversaries have shown no disposition to fair and liberal discussion, or to put the prevalence of conflicting sentiments on the proper issue of superior conviction, they have gradually put in motion all the means which artful ambition ever derived from prejudice, ignorance, and wilful blindness. For many years past their career has been with a high hand, and pursued with a supposed ascendant influence, corroborated with a pride of superiority, and insolence of success, intolerable to such as were placed in a situation to feel the secret sting of their contumely, or the lash of their public recrimination.

Their ascendency was *supposed*, because their little comparative omnipotence was never attempted. You are not to suppose that this city was void of all intellect; but while objects of a nature far different from theological discussion principally engrossed the public attention, and while a great body of people saw nothing about these men but the snowy robes and angelic meekness of peerless sanctity, and a still greater number rendered careless about a religion equally repugnant to reason and common sense, and independent of every province of the human mind, cared little through what conduits this turbid stream of inconsistency, mystery, and fanaticism flowed, the ignorant were silent through veneration, the irreligious through indifference, the pious from love of peace, and the interested from motives of popularity. And all were silent:

"Inde toro, pater Æneas sic orsus ab alto."

THE TRIANGLE.

THIRD SERIES.

No. I.

If the opinion of Buffon, that man is a gregarious animal, were not admitted as an evidence of the fact, the observation of every intelligent mind would lead to that conclusion. There is something equally grand and pleasing in the idea, that all rational beings are social; and, even admitting that an intelligent creature could be so constituted as to endure solitude without pain, yet, we may safely suppose, that reason would be wasted, if bestowed on such a creature; which supposition, the seclusion of the hermits and many of the monastic orders seems to justify.

If the presumption would be too great to make any allusion from this idea to the mysterious nature of Deity, who, in himself, has a plentitude of perfection and felicity, we may safely, and must necessarily, believe, that the most exalted of all creatures could not be happy but in society.

Our pleasures are usually divided into corporeal and intellectual, or mental. The pleasures of the mind are again resolved into those of the heart and affections, and those of the understanding. Some of these lie nearer the region of sense, and others of thought; some seem to belong exclusively to the body, others to the mind. Addison considers the pleasures of the imagination as occupying a kind of middle region between

the two distinct provinces of our nature, and occasionally deriving auxiliaries from, and communicating enjoyment to both.

Beside these, and holding a higher and purer region, there are the pleasures of the understanding. These seem to lie wholly in the province of the intelligent and immortal nature. What the essence of the soul is, we know not; and we can only refer it to the unknown nature and constitution of the soul, that the perception or discovery of truth should give it pleasure. But that it does, and that under certain cirumstances, to a very high degree, no one can doubt. This, perhaps, may be among the final causes of the social principle.

Knowledge is the food of the mind; and in this, the analogy between the body and mind is obvious; for, as the sustenance and growth of our corporeal frame is an object ulterior to all the pleasures of the palate and the gratifications of appetite, so knowledge, while it gives pure and exalted pleasure to the mind, expands, ennobles, and raises it nearer the perfections of more exalted natures. And there are few topics more animating and delightful than the consideration of the means of gaining knowledge with which we are partially furnished here, and shall be more fully hereafter. And for this we are principally indebted to the gospel, in which life and immortality are brought to light. In our present feeble and mortal state, our progress seems slow, and often retarded; yet the grandeur of the surrounding universe is open before us; the volume of Revelation is in our hands, and many sublime and glorious objects engage our attention, and exalt our ideas. How, then, will it be in the spiritual world, where our faculties will be strong, acute, and adapted to converse with spiritual creatures of various orders, and in a language of as much facility as thought? The ceaseless ages of immortality will bring amazing improvement—will unfold new powers—elicit new faculties. And then, the accumulated and still growing felicity and grandeur of millions of creatures, in a field of operation as unlimited as immensity and eternity, will never cease to open new sources of knowledge. But God himself—God the Creator, the Saviour, the Ruler, the Lord of all, will be their chief good, the fountain of discovery, instruction, and happiness.

The question has been discussed, whether the city or the country be most favourable to the progress of the human mind in knowledge. A centre of intelligence, an assemblage of character, frequency of intercourse, and the influence of wealth and commerce on the arts and sciences, which in every city must be considerable, seem to give, at first view, decided advantages to the city. On the other hand, the quiet of the country, so favourable to calm reflection, the increased avidity of the mind when restored to its natural tension and tendencies by the absence of all disturbing influences; in short, the leisure and silence peculiar to a region where hurry and bustle are not as fashionable to those who do nothing as those who do most, seem to point out the country as the place for thought and application of mind.

Having, in the first number of the former series, adverted to several useful and benevolent improvements in this city, but which speak best their own eulogium in the relief they afford to thousands of sufferers, I trust it will not be displeasing to the polite and ingenuous reader to reflect, for a moment, on the advantages and incentives Providence has given this city to improve in every thing useful and ornamental, and particularly in knowledge.

1. The commercial advantages of this city are rivalled by none in the new, and by few in the old world. Should the grand Columbian canal, intended to form a communication between this city and the great lakes, be opened upon the plan of those enlightened and enterprizing citizens who have made it so much the object of their attention, this port would ultimately surpass, in its advantages, those of Alexandria, Constantinople, or London. Indeed, those of London are rather adventitous than natural. On this point, the patriotic reader will do well to consult the history of Carthage, of Athens, Syracuse, Venice, Genoa, the cities of the Hanseatic League—I mean Antwerp, Bruges, and, in later times, Hamburgh and Amsterdam. Let me here, once, and once for all, implore the citizens of this favoured city to forget the jealousies and collisions of private interest and national politics, and direct their eyes towards that bright summit of grandeur and felicity which Providence has

set within their reach, and invites them, not by war and conquest but by virtuous industry and enterprise, to ascend.

A free government and liberal policy point the way. It is not the design of government to create enterprise, to set people at work, or to pay them when the work is done. All that is desired in government is to clear the way for the laudable efforts and operations of the enterprising and well-disposed; to repress the intrusions and infractions of dishonesty, and to honour those who do well for themselves and the public. In these important respects we are favoured beyond any nation that ever existed. There are, indeed, various ways in which government may smile on industry, and touch the wheels and springs of enterprise, but that may be esteemed the wisest course of legislation which, on the whole, gives property the most security, presents the fewest embarrassments to private enterprise, and the strongest incentives to industry in the whole population of a country. With such a government we are favoured.

3. The local and political advantages of this city are nobly illustrated, and speak for themselves. What was, fifty years ago, little more than a considerable village, is now in the second rank of cities on the globe, with a population of an hundred thousand people, rising in commerce, respectable for wealth, distinguished for industry, and not wanting in public order. It must be admitted, that a more general spirit of improvement in the liberal arts, and in useful knowledge, would raise the character, and promote the prosperity, of the city. I do not make this remark without recollecting the respectable progress already made by associations of gentlemen with this truly noble and patriotic end in view. The societies for promoting literature, the arts, and the various branches of professional and general knowledge, in this rising and prosperous city, cannot be viewed but as objects of the highest public interest. These institutions, however, it should always be remembered, derive the surest guarantee from an enlightened and intelligent community, on which they rest as their firmest basis. Without this, with whatever spirit they may originate, by whatever force of genius they may commence, there can be little promise of their perpetuity, much less of their future eminence.

4. The sources of intelligence, instruction, and improvement, are already become numerous, diversified, and great. A commercial intercourse with polite nations, and with all parts of the globe, facilitates the pursuits of the philosopher, the inquirer, and the man of taste and letters. True, indeed, the want of property in some that have taste, and the want of taste in others that have property, diminish the advantages that might otherwise flow from this grand scale of communication. Yet these circumstances, whose union is so important, will sometimes unite; and where they do not, the defect must be remedied by industry. But the territories of the United States, embracing so important a section of an entire continent, and so copious a variety of natural productions, comprise of themselves a world of knowledge still to be explored, point to great and various enterprises which still sleep in the womb of futurity, and, I trust, to various forms and grades of illustrious characters, still to rise and adorn this youthful nation.

5. From these advantages others have risen, which, though more adventitious, are not less important. The professions of *law* and *medicine* are filled and supported by men of eminence; some of them distinguished by the first literary honours of Europe, and others whom any professional institution would be proud to claim. And if our citizens feel a conscious pride and pleasure in the approbation which strangers of taste and distinction express of the noble edifice in which our courts assemble, they shall not feel less, when those persons have visited the interior of that building, and listened to the eloquence of the bar, and the wisdom, dignity, equity, and skill, of the bench of justice there held.

But all these, and similar advantages, are evidences of one great advantage, in which, perhaps, this city has been inferior to none—the blessings of God. It has, indeed, been scourged, but with speedy returns, and signal indications, of divine favour. Pestilence and war have, at times, cast a gloom upon its prospects, and thinned its population; but peace, and health, and plenty, have soon returned. Let not the operation of natural causes withdraw our attention from that invisible hand which plants a nation, and builds a city.

With these, and similar advantages for general improvement, the incentives to that grand object are surely no less worthy of consideration; and some of them are peculiar to our own country, if not to this city.

1. Youth is a season of ardour, novelty, emulation, and hope. Cities and nations, no less than individuals, have their infancy and youth, their manhood and dotage, or decline. Nothing merely human, and of a social nature, presents a more interesting object, than a flourishing city wisely governed, just risen to wealth and greatness, and commencing a race of glory. The novelty, the untried ground to be passed over; the discouragements which appal the feeble, but rouse and enflame the great and generous spirit; the ardour and activity which mingle in the checkered scene of clouds and sunshine; the first noble essays of art, are thus beautifully described by the prince of Latin poets:

"Instant ardentes Tyrii; pars ducere muros
Molirique arcem, et manibus subvolvere saxa;
Pars aptare locum tecto, et concludere sulco.
Jura magistratusque legunt sanctum que Senatum
His portus alii effodiunt; hic alta theatris
Fundamenta locant alii; immanesque columnas
Rupibus excidunt, scenis decora alta futuris."

2. In addition to the spring which novelty gives to early prospects and a first attempt, and the ardour with which hope inspires an untried course—principles of action to which the founders of new institutions are no strangers—the noble and patriotic feelings of our citizens have continually the advantage of deriving a stimulous from a two-fold comparison: I mean with the great cities of the polished nations of Europe, on the one hand, and with the rival and rising cities of our own country, on the other.

The gigantic size and antique structures, the enormous wealth and vast power of London, that grand emporium of universal commerce, upon a just comparison, will occasion no discouragement, but the reverse, when it is considered that she is what she is, after a race of two thousand years. Besides, in the complex causes of her elevation, though there is much to admire and imitate, yet

various and powerful principles have there had operation, from which every friend of humanity ought to desire a perpetual exemption. London presents a stupendous aggregation of wealth, intellect, and power, probably, in all respects, never equalled, though, in some respects, surpassed, by ancient Rome; yet among all cities, both ancient and modern, perhaps ancient Athens affords this city the noblest model for imitation. Her free government, her amazing spirit of enterprise, the general intelligence and good understanding of her citizens, the splendour of her progress in the arts and sciences, and, in fine, her public spirit, which, as Hobhouse, a late judicious traveller, observes, enabled her to erect more magnificent works and noble edifices than seemingly all the kingdoms of Europe combined could now produce, show us what one small state can perform, and have rendered her the admiration of the world. In praise of Athens it may be said, that, though she colonised more, she conquered less, than any state of equal power; and her wars for conquest were as rare as her defence was firm and terrible whenever she was invaded.

In regarding Athens as a model, we cannot refrain from the melancholy reflection, that, notwithstanding the splendour of her arts and sciences, she was deficient in the most important points of knowledge—the knowledge of God and of true religion. Of this they seemed sensible, by their famous inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD, which St. Paul made the theme of his eloquent address. Yet the powerful minds of Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, and others, whether from their proximity to the fountain of revelation, from their general reading, or from deeper causes, had many just conceptions of God, and of the immortality of the soul. Yet the illuminations of these great and distinguished minds, proved as little to the advantage as the credit of Athens. What was the fate of Socrates? He suffered death as a martyr to the truth. The priests of Jupiter and Juno could not bear the splendour and convictions of that light which disclosed the darkness and impurity, the madness and folly, of their superstitions. They urged the populace to put him to death. A set of priests, as I said, in every nation under heaven, have always resisted the progress of light, and have been triangular.

Athens was wanting in humanity; her maxims of government were generally cruel, severe, and haughty; and the fate of many of her best and greatest men casts a gloomy shade upon her character.

Several important cities will rise, and are rising, in this country; but, from various causes, there generally has been, and will be, but one first-rate city in a country or nation. China and Russia form the only exception to this rule now in my recollection. The former, from her unparalleled population, being almost one continued city; and the latter has, properly speaking, two capitals; one being the seat of the empire, and the other the royal residence. The wealth and talents, and, consequently, the rank and splendour of a nation, will generally ultimately centre in one place. There can be but one London in England; there could be but one Rome in Europe, and but one Athens in Greece, though there were many independent states.

Whatever may be said of natural advantages, the standard will not follow them, unless carried by the hands of industry and enterprise. Futurity alone can determine what city shall eclipse the glory of all others in the union. Every one is at liberty to make his own conjectures, aided by the indication of present appearances. But I will venture to say, that this eminence will, and must rise, from the combination of three ingredients: *wealth*, *intellect*, and *public spirit*. Wealth alone is insufficient, as we may judge from its effects on the base and sordid miser, whose penuriousness, if it be not so extreme as to deprive him of personal comfort and gratification, will, at least, restrict his schemes and enterprises to his own personal benefit. Intellect alone is insufficient; otherwise, we should see men of the greatest talents successful and excelling in business, and accumulating property. But where greatness of mind, public spirit, enterprise and wealth combine, the greatest effects are produced, as Carthage, Athens, Rome, Venice, and London, have in succession evinced.

It must be admitted that wealth, more than knowledge and taste, has engaged the attention, and roused the enterprising spirits of this city. I therefore cannot but hail with pleasure every indication of the commencement of a new era. Surely many of our citizens are in circumstances sufficiently easy to

allow a division of their attention between pecuniary and literary objects. There are many others whose decided preponderation of taste towards the latter object would be sufficient to command their attention and efforts undivided. I have recently perceived, with pleasure, efforts making to erect a forum "*sine justitiæ legisque terrore*," as a nursery of reason and eloquence, among young men of this city. I hope it will be rendered respectable by talents, and by the patronage of every friend to literature. And when it is recollected that the Lyceum of Athens rose from as small beginnings, it would not be extravagant to hope, that a future day may see this city adorned with an edifice where the great masters of the arts shall assemble with their pupils; where wits, orators, and philosophers shall find apartments devoted to the exercise of their several talents—an edifice whose marble columns will show, to succeeding ages, no less the skill of some future Phidias, and the munificence of a second Athens, than its appropriate devices and inscriptions the noble purposes for which it arose.

3. But the noblest incentive to the pursuit of knowledge, and a free and ingenuous inquiry after truth, is found in the satisfaction, the security, the pleasure, which marks the progress of such pursuit, and the distinguished honour and felicity which crown and glorify the acquisition.

As reason is given to man for social purposes, and is laid as a pledge of inestimable value, to be redeemed by suitable exertions, it is lamentable to perceive in what innumerable instances life is but the misuse of reason. If the ultimate end of living were to obtain food and raiment; if sensual enjoyment were man's ultimate happiness, then, indeed, the great body of mankind answer the ends of their existence. But how far is this from being the case? How little does it accord with the awfully interesting condition and amazing destiny of man! Placed, if I may so say, in the centre of illimitable space and duration; revolving with a world of people the annual circuit of heaven; not even without law to himself; bound by various obligations to those immediately around him, and by the perfect and immutable obligation of the law of God; made capable of knowing, serving, and glorifying God; destined to live and be hap-

py or miserable, to all eternity: in short, a sinner condemned, but for awhile reprieved, and placed under a dispensation of grace on further probation; soon to leave this world, and go before his great and final Judge to receive his just and eternal sentence, as the ground of which all his conduct in life is to be considered. But free pardon is offered, and a union is proposed between sinful man and his Creator, through the mediation of the adorable Redeemer.

Can the strongest mind, the most awakened conception, rise to the interest of such concerns as these? Who can fathom their depth, or measure their extent? And do they furnish no matter of curiosity to the inquisitive mind? Nothing sublime and glorious to the most enlightened mind? Nothing lovely and desirable to the pure and virtuous mind? Nothing formidable and alarming to every vicious and depraved mind?

The future prospects of mankind are great, yet still they have a course of present, immediate duty to perform. Be it that a man is going to India to take possession of a fortune there, he may have to learn the art of navigation, and then conduct his vessel, with great labour and hazard, through a long and dangerous voyage, before he enters on his inheritance. Alas! in this deceitful voyage of life it is that millions perish, and never gain the region of peace.

Man, considered in a kind of general and abstract sense, is immortal, even in this life; a consideration which hardly engages the attention of many a devout and honest Christian. Human life and existence are perpetuated, not in the same, but in a series of generations, which gives society a perpetuity which may be called an inferior or secondary kind of immortality. On this account it is that arts and sciences, and, indeed, the fine and elegant arts, and all branches of literature, become necessary. For the same reason, it is desirable for nations to come up to a common level of general knowledge; and, while individuals and societies endeavour to rise above the common level, and extend as far as possible the sphere of human knowledge, they serve as pioneers, and lead the way for states and nations to rise gradually to higher improvement.

Yet the knowledge of religious truth is as much more im-

portant than that of human science, as the interests of the soul are greater than those of the body. Every object which enlarges the mind, and invigorates the faculties, ennobles and exalts our nature; and such especially is the knowledge of our Creator.

A due attention to our duty and obligations to God, who is to be the eternal and infinite source of all our enjoyments, will prevent our making false estimates of happiness, and imbibing false notions of honour. His blessing alone can confer happiness; His approbation alone is the true test of honour. And, since I have arrived at this observation, let me ask the brave and chivalrous spirit, who, dazzled with false honour, is ready to associate every form of danger with glory, whether a knowledge of the truths and sanctions of religion would not convince *a man that God* had not given him life to surrender it, deliberately, to the furious miscreant who might demand it, or require him to expose it in single combat.

The fields of truth are wide; they smile in perpetual verdure; are covered with ever blooming flowers, and lightened with eternal glory. They invite, solicit, and allure the immortal mind's most noble powers to explore them—to begin that exalted and delightful employment which shall never end. Is there not danger that we shall hereafter regret our negligence, in suffering our minds to be overrun with errors, when the means of information were near us? Is there no danger lest a price so invaluable should be put into our hands, to get wisdom, but to be treated with neglect, because we have no heart to improve it? He who best secures the interest of futurity, lays the broadest foundation for present happiness, since both are accomplished by a faithful discharge of the duties God requires.

From the view we have taken of our advantages and incentives to acquire knowledge, it appears that they are not only in all respects great, but in some respects peculiar. But we seem so constituted, or so perverse, as not to be able to prize advantages which are common and permanent, nor to feel incentives whose operation is general. We seem unable to realize that a noble action is as noble, though done in an obscure hamlet, as if done at the grand Olympic celebration. The

charm of doing nobly, is too often derived from the consideration that it is seen, and admired, and praised. Yet who is not delighted and inspired with veneration at that heroic virtue, that invincible fortitude, which endured, silently and alone, or acted where there was none to praise or record it? or, perhaps, much more so, where every eye beheld it with contempt, and every voice loaded it with reproach.

Though the condition of human life furnishes but few occasions to develop the character of a Solon, a Leonidas, a Matthias, or a Washington, it furnishes constant occasion for equal virtues; nay, for the same virtues, though moulded by different events. The human family, truly vast, may be regarded as disposed into two grand divisions; the one inhabiting this world, the other the world of spirits. Though this world is peopled anew once in about a century, and substantially so once in thirty years, yet it is permanently occupied by eight hundred millions of people; which permanency, as I said above, gives society an inferior kind of immortality: and as to all the grand purposes of society—as to art, science, morals, government, religion, manners and customs, it is virtually the same as though this permanency were maintained by the same persons, instead of a series of generations. The conduct of some men influences the condition and happiness of great portions of the human family; and the conduct of every person exerts an influence, to a surprising extent, on others. These influences go by currents and tides; and a nation is compared to great waters: immense masses of opinion, prejudice, sentiment, passion, and intellect, are sometimes put into motion, from a cause or causes which infinite wisdom alone can trace; but does, in fact, trace, and, with an all-discerning and discriminating equity, fixes the responsibility where, perhaps, no mortal mind would suspect.

The certainty of an all-seeing Providence, and of man's future and speedy accountability in another world, and the perfect retribution that awaits him there, afford the highest encouragement to good and virtuous actions. Let no one fear lest what he does should pass unknown; for if well done, a higher plaudit awaits him than did the conquerors at the Olympic race; a more brilliant assembly shall hear his approbation pronounced,

not by the herald of the ceremony, but by the voice of God; and he shall be crowned, not with fading laurel, but with immortal honour.

But how great and fatal is their mistake, who, while living here on dreams of future happiness; while their pride and vanity are bloated with the idea, that they are the favourites of heaven, are constant worshippers at the shrine of selfishness, and live only for themselves! That august being, in whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, regards his creatures here. The welfare of his terrestrial family is ever before him, not less, being successive, than as though it were permanent. And that man who is the honoured instrument of doing good to men, of promoting the welfare of a nation, or a state, or a city, faintly shadows forth the beneficient Father of all.

Allow me, then, with deference, but with freedom, to address these considerations to the wealthy, the learned, and the patriotic; to those whose enlightened views may enable them to discern the means of advancing the city; whose liberal fortune clothes them with the power, and entitles them to a voice; and whose still more liberal feelings would find their highest gratification in so grand an object. But why do I speak of liberal fortune, since a nation's noblest enterprises are generally prior to the era of wealth. The Roman capital was built, which, says Livy, "subsequent ages might adorn, but could add nothing to her grandeur," while the territories of Rome were not twenty miles square; and the temple of Olympian Jupiter, the magnificience of which nothing on earth now equals, was built by the commonwealth of Elis, probably smaller than a county of this state. Whatever advantages there might be in promoting the exterior splendour of the city, and they are numerous, as ornament, when not at the expense of morals, improves and gratifies taste, and is agreeable to nature; yet the erection of towers, palaces, and monuments, must be left to the impetus of great occasions. But if the most rational origin of monuments is admitted to be the honour due to the memory of departed worth, our citizens seem furnished with an opportunity, and a motive, to bestow that honour, at least in one case, which skrinks from no comparison.

But there is a species of improvement attainable at less expense than that of external magnificence, and which promises more solid and permanent glory. Athens, which of all cities, ancient or modern, presents us the fairest model, in her government, politics, and commercial character, acquired more fame and honour from her arts and sciences than from her splendid temples and monuments. Her lofty ruins, indeed, which, after the desolations of two thousand years, astonish the world, are but the remnants of her arts and public spirit. She was the instructress of Rome; and the revival of letters, after the night of Gothic darkness, was but the resurrection of her arts and sciences.

To raise higher the standard of knowledge in a city, or nation, is, in effect, to increase the sum of intellect, and the fault is not in knowledge, or its promoters, if it do not increase the sum of human happiness. But the accomplishment of this great work is seldom the task of few, much less can it be effected by one. Like the temple of Ephesus, its foundations are laid by one generation, its superstructure carried up by another, and its decorations finished by a third.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. II.

KNOWLEDGE is, like the light of heaven, free, pure, pleasant, and exhaustless. It invites to possession, but admits of no preemption, no rights exclusive, no monopoly. It is not like wealth, of which one may deprive another—like honor, which the breath of envy may blast—like power, which superior power may overcome. The rational understanding being formed to acquire and treasure up knowledge, is thereby made capable of endless enlargement, and the objects of knowledge are extended through infinite space and eternal duration. The value of gold is but comparative; therefore, as its quantity increases its value diminishes; but knowledge has an absolute value;

wherefore, if all men had the knowledge of Newton, its value would not be lessened. If every rational creature were made equal in knowledge to the highest angel, by how much more just were his conceptions of God, his character, and perfections, by so much more would he be sensible of his own weakness and ignorance.

There seems to be but one trait in the human character more surprising, or a greater proof of depravity, than the indifference of most people relative to the acquisition of knowledge; especially, the knowledge of God. Where do they expect to go when they leave this world? Into whose hands will they fall? What do they expect or hope to be employed about, to all eternity? Who is to find them a place of residence, and supply their wants? Can it but occur to them, that their happiness must be inseparably connected with the friendship and approbation of their Creator and Preserver? Can they avoid believing that God approves of some characters, and disapproves of others?

But, however absurd their opinions, or groundless their expectations may be, and on whatever false security they may rest, why should they wish to deprive others of the light of truth? Why stop the progress of inquiry, and cut off the sources of information? Why seal up the eyes of thousands in darkness, and consign them to ignorance, till the light of the coming world shall break upon them with awful terror and utter disappointment?

This has been the grand and favourite object of a very numerous class of men in every age and nation. And, as I said, is a more surprising trait of character, a proof of deeper depravity, than the indifference of men to truth, on their own account. I do not take up this subject merely as matter of philosophical speculation—I do it because the evil which it envolves impends this city. Resistance to free inquiry, and the progress of that light and conviction which ever follows the knowledge of the truth, has long been maintained and carried on with incredible vigilance and perseverance: I wish I were not constrained to say, with success bordering on triumph.

There has never been wanting to any nation, elevated in a

considerable degree above the savage state, in knowledge and refinement, a class of men whose grand aim has been to prevent the progress of truth, and obstruct all free inquiry. They seem to envy mankind the right and privilege of thinking for themselves. As they arrogate to themselves the dignity of being the sole arbiters of religious controversy, they resort to the most summary method, which is, to bind up people's eyes, and keep them in total ignorance; and in that way are guilty of the most cruel, destructive, and atrocious invasion of human rights and privileges which ever entered the conception of man. The tyrant who enslaves the body does nothing in comparison with this. He may clothe his captive in chains, and lay him low in a dungeon; but the soul, freer than air, more rapid than light, regards no chains, is limited to no dungeons.

"The thoughts, that wander thro' eternity,"

defy all bolts and bars; over its volitions monarchs have no power; its desires can wing their way to heaven, and its internal operations mock at all created force.

Such are the soul's inborn powers and native freedom—nay, more, it can soar above all outward forms of danger, can triumph over death and the grave, and looks forward upon eternity as its own.

Happy would it be for mankind did every soul know its power, and enjoy its freedom; feel its dignity, and appreciate its privilege! But who could imagine that one man could enslave the soul of another? There is a keener ambition than that which aims to controul our external freedom; an ambition to enslave and bind fast in fetters the immortal intelligence within us; an ambition to direct our thoughts, opinions, volitions, and faith; an ambition to interfere between the soul of man and his God; to estrange the soul for ever from the fountain of light and glory.

It is almost too painful and humiliating to be spoken—but, since it is a truth which the day of God will make manifest before all creatures, it cannot be concealed, that a set of men, who claim to be ministers of religion, have, in every part of the world, and in

every age, been the agents and instrments in this horrid work. They have set themselves up as the lords, or, rather, the tyrants, of men's consciences; and on a reputation for holiness, under the garb of hypocrisy, have built up a system of tyranny and religious oppression, in comparison with which, all temporal tyrannies and usurpations seem perfect freedom. The ministers of religion have not all been of this description; God has never been without true and faithful witnesses to maintain his truth, and honour his name. But when Elijah was the only prophet of the Lord in Israel, there were four hundred prophets of Baal, and four hundred prophets of the groves.

When the sun of righteousness rose upon the world, and the gospel kingdom was established, whose foundations had been laid of old, could it have been imagined that the meek and holy, the pure and peaceful, religion of Jesus Christ would be transformed into the bloodiest and most monstrous system of tyranny ever seen on the earth? That the corruption, cruelty, and crimes of Rome Heathen, would be thrown into the shade, and scarcely remembered, in comparison with the surpassing and incomparable wickedness of Rome Christian? It was so: and this march of wickedness began by binding the conscience, and resisting the progress and the happy results of free inquiry. When it was perceived by worldly men that the Church, to use a common phrase, was become an object of ambition, they poured into it in swarms, like the locusts that plagued Egypt; and the gospel, whose genuine spirit was perfect meekness, peace, and love, was, by degrees, perverted, and heard to speak the language of pride, haughtiness, and revenge. These proud and selfish spiritual tyrants could not rest; rites and ceremonies, pomp and splendour, grew apace, and what was at the bottom of it all was, that all right of private judgment and free inquiry was suppressed, and every man must tamely and silently submit his opinions and his conscience to these spiritual guides, who were, generally, as ignorant as they were impudent.

The abominable and ridiculous claim to infallibility was the last step; which was but the full surrender of the opinions and faith of all the world to one lordly and ridiculous wretch, more worthy of Haman's gallows than of a triple crown.

But, reader, there is a tincture of this extravagant claim visible in our days; indeed, every where visible where you find a little spiritual tyrant. The Reformation did not cure this enormous pride; and the reformers themselves, as soon as they had doubled the cape, began to lay their course back again from whence they started. Nothing is more difficult than for a man, stiff with spiritual pride, and full of the idea of his own importance, to believe, that a people are entitled to think for themselves. The reformed churches, at first, all started from this ground, and fell with fury to persecuting heretics; and where people were not willing to be converted, the zeal of their spiritual guides was promptly seconded by the civil magistrate, using fines, imprisonment, confiscation, banishment, and death, as hopeful means of convicting the sinner, and purifying the Church.—I, therefore, said, the Reformation was incomplete.

O, how unlike the gospel! How abhorrent from the spirit of Christ! And though it surely will not be denied, that the power was generally in the hands of better men, yet these persecuting churches were, in the sight of Heaven, as truly ecclesiastical tyrannies as the church of Rome. The homage paid by many in this country to those churches, in connexion with the spirit and temper they evince, shows, but too plainly, in what respects they desire to see those times restored. Yes, when they see Calvin assembling the people of Geneva, and imposing upon them a religious test, causing them to swear to maintain his doctrine, and forms of church order and worship, their eyes, no doubt, fail with longing to see this city encircled with the same hopeful barriers against error and innovation.

These men have lately set themselves up as the exclusive admirers and disciples of the reformers. One of them closed a statement of the affairs of his church, for the last year, before the late synod held in this city, by declaring, in a very pompous manner, that his people had been hearing "THE DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION." Did he mean, by the doctrines of the Reformation, the doctrine which Luther preached? No. Yet Luther's doctrine was certainly a doctrine of the Reformation. Did he mean the doctrines which Melancthon preached? No. Did he mean the doctrine of the English, or French re-

formers? No: for among all these, as to the points in controversy in this city, there was great diversity, and they were generally against him. Did he mean the doctrines which Calvin preached? Hardly: for Calvin did not teach the doctrine of original sin, as some now preach it. And I ask that man, or any man, to show the public where Calvin taught a limited atonement. All that is nothing; there was a hook in that pious declaration, which many an honest fish greedily swallowed; it was a hoax, and deserves no better name; and that, one of the lowest and basest kind. Who does not preach the doctrines of the Reformation? It is a term of no definite meaning, but calculated to mislead the ignorant and the simple. The reformers were not agreed in doctrine. Calvin was scarcely known in the group of the first reformers, and to such of them as he was known, his particular notions of predestination and grace were generally offensive, however correct they might be in themselves.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century is regarded by the protestant part of Christendom as a grand event—an event in which many millions of people take a deep interest. What member of the church of England, or Scotland, or Holland, or of all the protestant Germanic provinces, or of the protestants in France, or America, is there, who does not regard the Reformation as a glorious era in the Christian Church? Yet each one of this immense mass of people, who have the means of information, view the reformers, and their doctrines, not without discrimination. They see much to admire and revere, and much left, as the work of subsequent reformations.

But, people of New-York, there has been another reformation; a reformation in our days, in which we have a deeper interest; a reformation not less extraordinary in its nature, or glorious in its consequences: We have seen a nation rise into a state of perfect freedom and civil liberty. Even this event, and going no farther, is beyond all parallel in history. There is a marked providence even here, which I fear many, calling themselves Christians, have not regarded with the attention it demands, nor the pleasure that might be expected. Is it nothing that, from the discordant chaos of European aristocracy

and despotism, a government should spring up in the new world, founded in all the essential rights, and guarding all the rights of man? Is it not worthy of notice, that thirteen independent states should amicably unite in this grand project? Was there any thing like it in ancient Greece—was there ever a parallel?

But it is said, in reply, that this was all a civil or political transaction. Be it so: and was there nothing civil or political in the Reformation of the sixteenth century? What severed England and Scotland from the Roman see? Doubtless, the most ambitious prince and greatest tyrant that ever filled the British throne began that work. And Germany was more reformed by states than by individuals. In fact, the Reformation consisted externally in throwing off the yoke of the Roman pontiff; which, partly by spiritual, and partly by temporal claims, he had fastened on the most powerful states in Europe, and had, for ages, maintained by the sword; by which all tyrants maintain their dominion. It was, in a great degree, a political revolution.

But has this country witnessed nothing but a political revolution? Has not a phenomenon marked that revolution which indicates juster notions of religion, and of the true character of Christ's church, than were entertained by Luther, Melancthon, or Calvin—by Knox, Cranmer, or Ridley?—or, I add, by any, or all, the reformers put together? By some surprising influence, the American people, when severed from the British empire, came to the knowledge of the grand truth, that all men are naturally free, and have equal rights; among which liberty of conscience, and the right of inquiring after truth, and worshipping God, are the first. Connected with this, another truth of equal importance was discovered, viz. that the church of Christ, being a spiritual body, has no right to enforce her censures by temporal penalties, or by the arm of civil power.

Here, reader, perished, not only the first, but the last, the greatest, the grandest, pillars of popery. Or, to vary the figure, "the tree whose height reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the ends of the earth," had been, indeed, cut down by the "watcher;" but, in the language of the same prophet, "the stump of the roots was left, with a band of iron and brass,

in the tender grass of the field." A band of iron and brass indeed!—For notwithstanding the greatness of the Reformation, latterly become so popular a theme, and trumpeted so loudly, to withdraw the attention of mankind from a much more recent reformation, what church, or what nation, became so reformed as to discover that people have a right to think for themselves? What nation came out so pure from this refining fire as not, in their turn, to erect the bloody standard of persecution, and fall upon heretics, *i. e.* all who presume to differ from them, right or wrong, with fire and faggots?

From the foundation of the world, the honour, and pleasure, and advantage, of perfect civil and religious liberty has been reserved for this nation. No other nation, ancient or modern, savage or civilized, ever enjoyed them both before. It was reserved to be discovered by the leaders in the *American reformation*, that a man demeaning himself peaceably in society, and conducting as a good citizen, is accountable only to God for his religious opinions. Should he even chance to differ from what is called orthodox, or from the popular faith, he does not expect to be dragged before a ghostly Jesuitical tribunal, to whom he must deliver up the keys of his conscience, or be delivered over to the tormentors. A man in this country is not obliged to hurry away to Canada, the West Indies, New Spain, or Europe, a voluntary exile, for fear of suffering the fate of a heretic; and, perhaps, when arrived there, in hourly dread that letters missive will reach the magistrates, desiring them to seize and bring him to justice: But for what? for murder, arson, burglary, or treason, no doubt!—O no! because he is "*unsound in the faith*;" when, perhaps, in the sight of God, he is the Christian, and his persecutors are the heretics. This, reader, was the general mode of proceeding in those delightful times which certain persons so ardently wish might return. This was then the fashion.

Neither the gospel, nor the spirit of Christ, ever moved men to persecution: every persecutor, therefore, of whatever description, sect, or denomination, is unsound both in faith and practice, and is no model for an American.

The American reformers have discovered that a nation is not

and exterminate the wicked: in a word, when a church and a nation were considered as the same thing, and provision was made for rendering church-membership and privileges hereditary as estates and titles—the increase of the church being rendered as certain as that of natural population—as resting on the same footing.

The men whose scheme I have described as triangular know, that if people are suffered to read and inquire freely—if light and knowledge prevail, their scheme will fall to the ground. It will not stand the test of examination; it will not endure the light of evidence; it cannot subsist under a just comparison with truth. And though they look on the interference of the civil law, and the arm of government to crush inquiry, as no longer to be expected, they are resorting to other methods with incredible industry and vigilance. And I am bold to say, that there is not a spot on earth where greater pains have been taken to accomplish that hopeful purpose than in this city.

I have frequently alluded to this subject in former numbers: I shall here state some of the methods used to prevent inquiry, and to exclude the light and truth from this city. I hope it may be read with patience, even by those who differ with me in opinion; and whoever shall read it with due attention, I aver that, in spite of prejudice, they will both see and feel that the picture, in some points, suits the original. And I observe,

1. These pompous allusions to "the doctrines of the Reformation," are made with no other purpose, and have no other effect, than to silence inquiry, and strengthen prejudice. Ah! says one, "I preach nothing but the glorious doctrines of the reformers—I am no innovator—no Hopkinsian." Reader, do you not see that all this is a priestly trick? For how can the people of this city know any thing about the doctrines of the reformers? While it fills their incautious minds with veneration for a wonderful Calviniculus, it shuts their eyes, and stops their ears. Perhaps, too, this declaration is made by some greenhorn tyrant would-be, who knows no more of the doctrines of the reformers than of the doctrines taught on the other side of the moon. There was one grand point in which all the reformers agreed, viz. in condemning the usurpations and corrup-

tions of the church of Rome:—happy would it have been had they rejected all those corruptions; but, as I have said, they as universally agreed in one fundamental error of Rome—that intolerance and bigotry which exercises tyranny over the consciences of men. For, as I said, this was "the stump of the roots, with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field." All flesh is grass!—and, whether reformed or not, spiritual despots generally find means to bind that grass in bundles to be consumed with the rest of their works, as wood, hay, and stubble.

But in the great doctrines of Christianity, the leading reformers differed extremely and contended vehemently. For a man, therefore, at this time, to say, "I am no innovator—I preach the doctrines of the reformation," is an abuse of language, and a gross insult to those who may differ from him, but could say the same that he does, with as much truth, and perhaps more. It is designed to cast a mist before people's eyes, who have not the means of examining, and in whose minds the names of the reformers—even the very sound of the phrase, "The Reformation," is associated with every thing great and venerable. And that man who has brass and impudence enough to trump himself up as the immaculate disciple of the reformers, is regarded by a credulous multitude as all made up of sanctity, truth, and wisdom.

There is one point, and but one, in which these men follow undeviatingly the steps of the reformers, and that is a spirit of rigid intolerance and persecution. It is with reluctance and deep regret, that I allude thus frequently, and unpleasantly, to the memory of the reformers; but since they are laid as the first step in the staircase of ambition, it is necessary that the truth should be spoken, and the people undeceived. I admire and revere the reformers, and have read their lives with as much pleasure as any man living; but I do not admire their faults; and I well know the spirit and maxims of the policy and government of those same reformers would not be endured for a day, "no, not for an hour," in this country.

Citizens of New-York, what would be your feelings, should some leading clergyman in this city acquire sufficient influence

to cause the people to be assembled, by legal authority, and an oath exacted from them, to maintain the forms of worship and standard of doctrine HE SHOULD PRESCRIBE; and that every one who refused, should be utterly disgraced, and, perhaps, liable to be banished? Would you like it? Would you think it fine times?——Thus did Calvin in Geneva.

If, by the doctrines of the Reformation is meant, that *Christ died only for the elect*, that *all men deserved endless punishment for Adam's sin, independent of their own conduct*, and that *all men, aside from their inclination, are unable to obey God*, the expression is evidently and hugely false. These were not the doctrines of the reformers, or, at least, but a very small portion of them, when compared with the whole. The phrase, at best, is a vague unmeaning one, and derives its chief value from its effect on prejudice and ignorance; and that is the reason why it is adopted as a diplomatic term of trigonism. The people borrow it from the priest, and many as profound an ignoramus as walks the street, will be heard to say, when he retires from the sermon, "Ah! this is the language of the fathers; so they preached in the days of the Reformation."

It ought to be the joy and glory of an American divine to preach the doctrines of a much later reformation than that in Germany;—doctrines which prevail in a nation whose religious tenets are not shackled by "bands of iron and brass," forged by civil magistrates, at the instigation of some haughty pontiff;—doctrines which prevail, when it is no longer thought a miracle for a man to rise above the more than Babel confusion of school logic, or the wonderful flights of peripatetic philosophy.

Reader, is it wonderful, is it incredible, that the first nation on earth which has been able to perceive the rights of mankind, both civil and religious—the first nation since the grand apostacy that has exonerated the church from the alluring and destructive influence of civil power—the first nation that has restored the soul of man to freedom, and invited him to free inquiry in the grandest of all concerns—I say, is it incredible, that such a nation should make some progress in the discovery of truth? Or, must we go back to the days of intolerance, of ignorance, of persecution? Must we go back to the first crude vision of

early twilight, where no shadow is distinct, because there is no sunshine, and there fix the standard of truth, which no subsequent light is to improve—before which all evidence is to be veiled, and all inquiry to cease, for ever?

The progress of light and knowledge in our own country is scoffed at and abused by these men, it is treated in a manner which ought to excite the pity and indignation of every friend to his country, and must be regarded by Christ himself as the blackest ingratitude.

This incessant driving back to the days of the reformers, to the discerning eye, fully developes their object. It is to leave the people nothing to do; to extinguish, at one stroke, all inquiry after truth, which, according to them, is scarcely to be found in any thing but the barbarous Latin folios of the sixteenth century, which few of the people, and, in fact, not many of their teachers, can read. I ask, whether it would not be more honourable, more dignified, more like ministers of Christ, for them to urge that they preach the doctrines of the gospel, the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles? But, Ah! they know better: that would not be so safe; would not answer their purpose so well; would be more liable to detection; would not be so true; although it is not a fact very easily made out, that they preach the doctrines of any one of the reformers. Yet it is an assertion which few of their hearers can contradict—an assertion which fills the ignorant with great veneration.

2. Their preaching is not calculated to excite inquiry. They say, they preach the doctrines of the Reformation; but what do they preach? A triangle! They dwell for ever on a few leading points, almost without variety of discussion. A congregation may hear them eternally; and never be wiser. If men are not selfish by nature, when proselyted or converted by their preaching, they come out daring advocates for selfishness. Their three grand doctrines paralyze reason, quiet the conscience, extinguish all endeavour after an amendment of life, or to obtain God's favour, and make out a religion independent of the heart or intellect. There is nothing in sin or holiness but imputation; the sinner is condemned and punished for im-

they, "for that matter, but this carnal reasoning, this metaphysical hair-splitting, does not savour of the gospel; I would rather hear something about Christ." Nothing was ever more artful, and nothing was ever more hypocritical. The holy and glorious Redeemer himself is made the stepping-stone of ambition, and he that came a light into the world, to enlighten every man, is made to overshadow and obscure his own doctrines.

As they allow the preaching of others to open no source of instruction, and lead to no examination—as in their own sermons they trace round and round the triangle, till every stated hearer knows, at the reading of the text, what side or what angle is coming, so neither in their conversation do they lead to a single avenue of light. In private conversation, they affect great holiness and authority. They often make some ignorant gaper believe, that they can pierce the veil and see things unutterable. They talk about knocking boldly at heaven's gate—about demanding of God this and that favour; and of "keeping Christ to his word." But, withal, they take care to be very mysterious and mystical, and while, to the purblind catechumen, their faces often shine like that of Moses from the mount, the poor fellow is so dazzled, bewildered, and perhaps enraptured, that he has little thought of asking questions, or clearing up difficulties, and perhaps no purpose can enter his mind, in those awful moments, but that of seizing hold of the skirt of this great saint, and not letting go till he gets beyond the gulf.

As for doctrinal discussions and inquiries among the people, they are not encouraged—they are put quite out of fashion. When they happen to meet, it is rather recommended to them to talk about experimental religion; to wit, feelings which neither they nor their masters ever had. Far be it from me to say they never felt experimental religion; I hope otherwise; but the feelings of a man's heart pay no regard to prejudices of his understanding, or the absurd theories of his brain. Bread and beef are bread and beef, and look and taste alike in all countries, though they may be called by very different names. The genuine feelings of religion in a mind where gross selfishness is professed, and the grandest trait of the gospel, even universal

propitiation, denied, where sin and holiness are resolved into imputation, and faith is made the radical principle of religion, must be in an uncomfortable situation—must resemble some cornfields in Connecticut which I have seen, where the stones were so high and so large that you must turn your hoe edgewise to get earth enough to cover the seed. Yet I have known noble crops of corn sometimes raised there, notwithstanding. These stones lay on the surface, the soil was deeper. May it prove to be so with these triangular Christians.

At all events, their experimental conversations generally turn upon the sermons they have last heard; and from them, by an easy periphrasis, to the men by whom they were delivered; on which latter interesting theme they can dwell for hours with great earnestness and zeal. And full and perfect details of these conversations, together with all the encomiums, praises, eulogies, and applauses, reach their delighted ear within twenty hours from the moment of delivery. And how much better this, both for the minister and his flock, than for a set of men to meet, each one with his metaphysical file, hammer, chissel, drill, or scraper, to try the temper and the metal of the sermon; nay, to try all parts of truth, and boldly dare to form their own opinions of every proposition?—Hence, I remark,

5. They neither promote nor encourage the study of the scriptures, nor of theological truth among their people. Citizens of New-York, and Christian Brethren, I would not lay this charge had I not perfect assurance of its truth, and did I not sincerely believe it. And if I am mistaken in a point so fundamental, it is your interests I plead—it is the interests of thousands of souls, who are perishing for lack of knowledge, which induces me thus to encounter the shafts of malevolence, the rage of the designing, and the curses of the proud. But let them hurl their shafts, and let them fulminate their anathemas—I will declare the truth. Their thunders will not be heard on that day when His voice who speaks in thunders shall decide the question. Their many-coloured arts will gain no advantage in that court,

> "Where there's shuffling, where the action lies
> In its true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
> Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
> To give in evidence."

When an end is recommended as worthy to be attained, is it not usual to recommend and set on foot the means of attainment? How do they promote the study of the scriptures? What methods do they propose?—None! absolutely none! A man's name may be heard afar, and his pride may be gratified, by becoming a distinguished leader even in a national Bible Society, while his stated hearers and church members may be ignorant of the Bible. I highly approve of a national Bible Society; and I would to God, that every church in this city were a bible society, in a far stricter sense: which they are not. But the fault primarily and principally is not theirs; it is the fault of those by whose artful management that fairest book of knowledge is overlooked. Be not mistaken, Reader: admiring a fine sermon, or praising the piety and talents of a popular preacher, implies no knowledge of the Bible.

They institute an abundance of *prayer meetings*, to which I shall certainly make no objection. But "men ought to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting." "When thou prayest enter into thy closet," said the divine teacher. Every one knows that it is less necessary for men to assemble for purposes of prayer than of intelligence and instruction. Prayer is the soul's desire, going to God; and whatever justness of form, or force of elocution, we may use, or may be used in our hearing, a man prays for nothing but what he desires. I say nothing against public prayers—nothing against forms of prayer, which I have often heard with delight, affection, and, I hope, with consentaneous desire. But without knowledge the heart cannot be good; and these are select means and salutary institutions for promoting knowledge.

It is the remark of Addison, than whom few men possessed a sounder intellect, that he never heard six men of common understanding give their opinions deliberately on any subject, however familiar, without gaining some new idea. Six men of

ordinary capacity and information, who shall sit down, for an evening hour's conversation, shall read six verses in the gospel, and give their opinions distinctly and in rotation, upon each verse; canvassing each other's opinions, raising and solving objections with the freedom, simplicity, and kindness of Christians —marking their application to, and influence on conduct, and they shall retire instructed and edified, probably more than from hearing an ordinary judicious sermon. They surely cannot come up with Dr. Campbell, that prince of biblical critics. They cannot produce an elegant and learned dissertation on the different shades of the meaning of the terms *kerusso*, *euageliso*, and *didasko;* they cannot show that the plural of *diabolos* does not mean devils, or that *diabolai* signifies nothing worse than tattling old women. They have not oriental learning to carry them back to the Talmuds, and Targums, to the ancient copies and versions, neither can they collate so many of the different readings, or so many of the strange and ridiculous expositions of *old writers*, as to render the plainest passage of the Bible obscure and unintelligible. They cannot quote Rab. Sol. Ben Jarchi, Kennicottius, Father Simon, Gosselinus nor Rambaggius.

The Bible abounds in plain truth, expressed in a manner adapted to the meanest capacity; in this it surpasses any book that ever was written. The greatest reader with whom I was ever acquainted, once remarked to me, that he had often been surprised to perceive, when he came to read expositors and annotators, in how many instances his first and most childish apprehensions of the meaning of scripture had been confirmed, and in how few instances his first and earliest notions of the meaning of the Bible, whether obtained from the conversation of his parents, or from his own almost involuntary reflections, had been discovered to be incorrect.

Errors in doctrine do not generally originate from mere inadvertent misconceptions of scripture, but from far more culpable causes. Learning and ingenuity have had a large share in corrupting divine truth. When a man of great talents has a favorite theory to make out, what must he do? He runs through the Bible, and like the tyrant who stretched or clipped his guests

to suit them to his bedstead, he effectually stretches or clips every adverse passage till it suits him: he confuses the perspicuous, distorts proportion, penumbrates the luminous, illustrates the obscure; breaks the neck of one passage to straighten it, of another to crook it; clothes one passage with as many glosses as the daughter of Aurengzeebe wore suits of imperial gauze, and scaiths another as the morbid dissector does his subject, to lay bare the muscles:—in fine, his theory is his line, which he stretches upon the Bible, and, like a master workman, raises or depresses, advances or retreats, every part till it hits the line. The work is done; and he has displayed great learning and equal talents, with which the reader is charmed, and no less awed by his authority and name. He has done it with a master's hand, and perhaps it might require learning and talents equal to his own to confute him.

Men admire, and the world follows him; but, reader, if God's word were like the human body, it would bleed under his hand in every part, and suffer pain in every member. By these methods, every doctrine of the Roman, the Greek, the Arminian, the Antinomian, is made out. But the word of God is not such a book as can naturally lead to this infinite confusion of opinions. It is ambition and selfishness that do the work. When the day of God shall pour resistless light on every understanding, men shall see that their errors have been the offspring of pride and wilful blindness.

Every man is ready to say, "show me that I am wrong, and I will reform." But, alas! when errors have become popular, supported by great names, beautified and adorned by wealth and fashion, and fortified and defended by prejudice, passion, influence, and power, who is willing to see them in the light of error? Who has fortitude to meet the frowns of the powerful, the censure of those reputed for wisdom, the contempt of the learned, and the hatred or pity of the multitude? Barriers these, through which few can break. Here lies the strength of error, and the strongest bulwark against reformation. Errors are generally weak in themselves, far less supported by reason or evidence than truth; but they derive gigantic force from

their agreeableness to the mind, and from the difficulty there is in resisting the multitude.

I am no enemy to biblical criticism; I would be quite willing that our masters and professors in that noble science had ten times more of it than they have. I do not think them yet mad through much learning; yet I am aware that biblical criticism, as a profession, and as a science, may assume an attitude so imposing; may be so managed as to check, discourage, and crush the taste and spirit of inquiry into the import of the scriptures in the great body of the people. And I have seen, with inexpressible regret and disgust, that the professed expositors of the Bible, in this city, do artfully carry that business with so lofty and mysterious a hand, that the people, without knowing it, are led to regard the Bible, except when its meaning is dealt out to them in precious morsels by their teachers, as an almost sealed book.

I ask every reflecting man whether a wise nation will surrender up their liberties at the discretion of their rulers, because those rulers are wise and virtuous men? If they do, they are a ruined people; and this has been the ruin and downfall of all free governments. But how much more so has it ruined the church of Christ! When mankind surrender their understandings and consciences, without examination, to a set of men, they never more deserve to be entrusted with understandings, since they refuse to use them in the grandest of all concerns for which an understanding is given, or can be of use.

The moral maxims of vital importance to human happiness, the great body of practical wisdom, and, indeed, all the grand truths essential to salvation, are made perfectly plain in the Bible. But that which never engages the attention cannot be known, however plain it is made. Nothing can sufficiently engage the attention which is not made the subject of thought, reflection, conversation, and discussion. Conversation with a familiar friend, expressing our own conceptions and views of a subject, is the only way in which we become acquainted with that subject. Why is it necessary that ministers of religion should have about them such a vast apparatus of learning—should know so much and so accurately about theology?

Is it merely to make a splendid show, and now and then come out and dazzle and astonish their hearers with the pomp of their erudition? Doubtless; if we may judge from the conduct of many. Of what use is it if a man is looked upon as a walking, moving mass of divinity, if it must live and die in his carcass, and his infatuated admirers go on gazing and admiring him for his great knowledge, while they, alas! are comparatively ignorant, sleek and easy, as the horses that drag their carriage?

One grand reason why it is useful for a clergyman to possess great knowledge is, that he may communicate that knowledge and take measures that his people may also excel in knowledge, which I hesitate not to declare is not done at all, or most miserably done, by many in this city.

I have said the study of the scriptures, and the discussion of scripture doctrines, among the people at large, is not encouraged in this city. Who has taken any vigorous measures for the attainment of that object? What associations were ever formed among the people, and what progress made. So far from it, I venture to affirm, that, were any one of all these triangular pontiffs to discover, that a large number of his most judicious hearers had associated together, to meet once a week, to read the scriptures, and discuss doctrinal points, he would feel the greatest alarm, and would take immediate measures to suppress it. I put it to the consciences of those gentlemen that I speak the truth. Yes, they would feel much alarm, and with much reason: for so sure as the sun gives light, should the religious people of this city take a simultaneous determination to "read the scriptures daily," and, like the noble Bereans, examine for themselves, "whether these things be so," this wretched triangular, limited, contracted scheme of Antinomian selfishness would vanish away.

No: there are no such associations.—And whilst there is not a nobler object for which an association could be formed; whilst there are missionary societies, charitable societies, praying societies, Sunday school societies, Bible societies, there are no societies, amongst rich or poor, male or female, old or young,

pious or impious, for reading and understanding that invaluable book; for discussing and understanding those glorious and awful, those sublime and venerable, doctrines on which man's eternal felicity depends. They are willing, it seems, that people should pray, and give their money bountifully; that they should send Bibles to the Heathen, but do they wish them, in earnest, to take up that Bible, and adopt the only true and vigorous methods of understanding it? "I trow not."

A nobler amusement, a richer repast for the mind, an exercise better adapted to invigorate the faculties, enlarge the understanding, to amalgamate different minds, and conflicting opinions, cannot be devised. And the progress which the mind makes in these exercises is delightful and surprising. "I will speak," said Elihu, "that I may be refreshed." The mind, like the body, is invigorated by exercise; and if never exercised it is ever feeble and unformed. Six men, as I said above, who shall give their opinions on but six verses of the scriptures, however weak they may appear, at first, will, in a little time acquire facility by repeated efforts, system and arrangement by previous reflection, and from those very words, which they have heard pronounced hundreds of times, without awakening a single idea, new thoughts will occur, new beauties will expand, and important knowledge will be gained. It is well known that the human mind will improve in nothing to which it is made but the passive spectator. And this remark applies with greater force to that species of instruction derived from hearing. The habitual and orderly expression of our own thoughts, at stated periods, invigorates the powers of association and combination, fixes the mind to its object, assists comparison and deduction, while the mind resembles the distaff, and the discourse the hand which draws out the thread.

But, alas! if self-evident truth fails of any effect, if the noblest motives are without force against a tide of prejudice, and against the influence of a set of men, who patrole every street, and stand, *arrectis auribus*, at every corner, catching the undulations of every whisper, and forestalling the incipient symptoms of conviction, in vain do I dwell on this theme. Nevertheless,

it will not disturb the repose of my dying pillow, that I have lifted my voice while others were silent; that I have incurred the resentment of those whose friendship will prove more formidable to thousands than their enmity can be to one.

With few words I shall close this number. I have stated some of the methods used to prevent any disposition to inquire after truth, any taste for doctrinal discussion; and, combining with other, and, perhaps, accidental causes, they have rendered it altogether unfasihonable. The very taste for such conversation, reading, reflection, and pursuit, is extirpated, and there may also be clearly perceived in it the operation of judicial blindness. It is in the nature of man to love darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil.

But there is one other method more recently resorted to, to which I shall briefly advert. The sword is drawn, and the point of ecclesiastical censure is now fairly presented and opposed to the breast of every one who dares to deviate from what these divines term orthodoxy. In the last number of the last series, I noticed the pastoral letter of the synod of Philadelphia, in which Hopkinsian tenets are denounced as heresy. They have also fairly past a test act by which every minister licentiate is to be examined touching those points, and if found a Hopkinsian, is to be rejected. I noticed in the first series the expulsion of Mr. D—— from a seminary in this city, because he advocated those sentiments; and the same man whose signature adorned that disgraceful act of expulsion, has very lately, in a missionary society of this city, exerted his influence successfully against Mr. C——, and procured his rejection as a missionary, on the charge of his not being sound in the faith; although one third of the board of directors of the society agree in sentiments with Mr. C——.

This gentleman is becoming famous on the list of bigotry and intolerance, and it is fitting that his official conduct be held up to public observation. Neither ought the reader to imagine that I am actuated by mere gratuitous malice in calling his attention to such conduct. The people of this country, and of this city in special, ought to study the fable of the shepherd's

boy and the wolves. They have in fact, so often, and so long, heard the cry of wolves: they have heard the cry of Tyranny! Tyranny! from all quarters, from all parties, till they have grown callous to the cry; yet wolves will come at last.

The people ought to be apprised, that the points of doctrine, so recently censured by these men as heresy, have never been considered, in any part of this country, as a bar to communion, or as a wall of separation between Christians, as individuals or as churches. They are not so considered in the churches of England or Scotland, nor, indeed, by any of the protestant churches in Europe, except where mingled with other matters which involve religious order and discipline.

Is it a happy omen—does it promise well to the Christian church, in this country, that such a bigoted and intolerant spirit should now begin to show its deformed features and cloven foot? Is it best for individuals, and churches, and Presbyteries, and Synods—nay, for different denominations and sects, to begin to hurl their censures and anathemas at one another? Shall Bible and Missionary Societies, generally embracing denominations of different sentiments, turn from their great object, and fall upon their own members with base invectives and furious anathemas? Yes:—this, it seems, is now to be done, and a grand specimen was recently given, as already noticed, in which a young licentiate of most unblemished morals, exemplary piety, and promising talents, was rejected as a missionary, and condemned as unsound in the faith.

This hopeful business was managed, and violently carried through, though one third of the members of the board agreed in doctrine with Mr. C. by the same man who aided, or rather was principal, in D.'s expulsion. I ask the candid and well-disposed of all denominations, of all orders, whether such a man can be regarded in any other light than as a blind, haughty, and furious bigot? I ask the disinterested reader what sort of ministry, that will be, trained up in his maxims, formed from his precepts and examples? nor will they need to wait his falling mantle, to imbibe a double portion of his spirit: For that is a spirit, into which "*Non docti, sed nati, non instituti, sed imbuti sumus.*"

There is no privilege, it would seem, no honour, no public nor private advantage, to be derived from that equal consideration, reciprocity of indulgence and charity, equality of rank and immunity, which all religious sects hold in the eye of our free and excellent constitution, and are thereby required to hold in the eye of each other. From this soil of liberty and justice, watered by the blood of patriots, is now to spring up, not a crop of warriors, where dragon's teeth had been sown, but a race of stern, unrelenting, religious despots, who are to change the order of things in this country. And as property and lucrative stations are primary objects with them, they will seize, if possible, on the great cities, and fix their triangular iron box on every pericranium they can allure, flatter, babble, or frighten into it; and if any one throws it off, ah! a heretic! a heretic! "unsound in the faith!" "rotten at the core!" And could they have but the *syndics* and civil magistrates to second their pious endeavours, and carry home their holy censures, what reformations we should have! we should quickly see the days of the Reformers return; and there would be none of the "northern storm" in all this. No! but frequent blasts from a hotter and more murky region.

Whoever shall read this number, and shall judge that the severity of the remarks are disproportioned to the requisition of the occasion, will do well to consider the grand theme repeated by the voice of the union herself, at every anniversary of our independence. Why did our forefathers leave the shores of Europe, and encounter the perils of the deep—the dangers and privations of the wilderness? Liberty of conscience was one grand motive. Here, under a guiding providence, they planted the TREE OF LIBERTY, and by the suns and showers of heaven, it has grown to a majestic size. Whoever opposes the censures of the church to freedom of opinion and private judgment, in the manner these men have done, is a religious tyrant, and sins against the highest privilege of the nation; and had our civil rulers no more discretion and virtue than he has, our land, from being a land of freedom and happiness, would become an Aceldama—a field of blood.

Reader, you hear, in these pages the voice of a single, obscure, unknown, individual. You can, with ease, slight and spurn it. With ease can you tear the unfinished page, or hurl the book into the flames, as the infatuated king of Judah did the message of the prophet. But you will perceive that that rash act did not save his country, nor himself; neither will a similar act prevent or procrastinate the evils which impend. Had public bodies a consciousness, and could the religious community of this vast country speak, as saith the prince of orators, "*Si illa, una voce, loqueretur*," she would bewail, with tears, the ingratitude of her children; she would express her indignation, in a language suitable to her dignity, at those who envy others the blessings they derive from her; and her contempt at the impotent ambition which claims powers which she never granted. But she would perceive these daring attempts, generally made by strangers to her blood, and aliens to her free and noble spirit:—exotics, which, withering in their native soil and climate, have been transplanted hither, to fatten on the credulity of the simple, to prove the virtue of the upright, and to punish the ingratitude of the wicked.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. III.

I HAVE said, in the preceding number, that the people in this city, who listen to a certain strain of preaching, which I have styled triangular, are not well instructed in the great doctrines of Christianity. I do not say this without a due consideration of the allegation it imports; and I am fully aware, that to the candid mind of persons at a distance, or to the incautious on the spot, it may appear too severe. It shall be the business of this number to make good the ground here assumed.

The instructions given are incorrect in their nature, deficient in their extent, and tend to extinguish rather than excite inquiry.

Two volumes of sermons have lately been published in the city.* These sermons I offer as documents to prove the first part of this charge, viz. that incorrect instructions are given. When a man comes out in two large volumes of sermons, in a great and polished city, we have some reason to believe he has selected his ablest productions.† The third sermon of vol. I. is entitled "The glory of a nation." Page 104—5, this writer observes:

"We shall first examine their laws, (the Hebrew) confining ourselves, however, to a few general notices.

"In these laws, the great principles of moral duty are promulgated with a solemnity suited to their high pre-eminence. Love to God, *with unceasing solicitude*, and love to our neighbour, *as extensively and forcibly as the peculiar design of the Jewish economy, and the peculiar character of the Jewish people would permit, are enjoined.*"

On these two commands, says Christ, hang all the law and the prophets; and they doubtless comprise the soul and essence of all religion; "for," saith the Apostle John, "he that loveth is born of God: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

But was ever such a definition given of the law of God as our divine here gives?—a definition so poor, so meagre and wretched?—a definition which tarnishes, nay, abolishes the divine law? I think a common school boy will perceive its hollowness: a person nourished from youth on the *amor sui* will even be shocked to read it. Who ever heard of loving God with "solicitude?" The first and grand import of solicitude is anxiety, which consists in a perturbed, depressed, fluctuating, fearful, and painful state of mind. Never was there a more ill chosen term to delineate the holy and glorious affection of perfect love, which God's law requires. "Perfect love casteth out fear:" "And herein," says John, "is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." But does not

* Dr. Romeyn's.

† A great writer says, that a man must be tall at 20, beautiful at 30, rich at 40, and wise at 50; or else never tall, beautiful, rich, or wise. The author of the sermons ought not to be far from wise.

the law require perfect, supreme love to God, an affection free from all solicitude?

Selfish love to God is indeed full of solicitude—full of anxiety, because it is grounded on nothing but an expectation of benefit; and as the selfish man has no certain evidence that God will continue to do him good, nothing is so faint, so wavering, so full of anxiety, as his love to God.

But the second part of this definition is still, if possible, more extraordinary. This writer tells us, that the law requires a man "*to love his neighbour as extensively and forcibly as the peculiar design of the Jewish economy, and the peculiar character of the Jewish people would permit.* It seems, then, that a man's love to his neighbour is to be regulated by two considerations, 1st. *The peculiar design of the Jewish economy*, and 2d. *The peculiar character of the Jewish people.* In the name of all that is marvellously absurd, I desire to know what connexion a man's love to his neighbour has with the peculiar design of the Jewish economy, and which way this wonderful definition points? If any definition or exposition of the spirit of the moral law ever merited for a man the epithet of *Antinomian*, surely this definition does for its author. For the peculiar design of the Jewish economy being long ago accomplished, that economy was brought to an end; and with it a man's obligation to love his neighbour, according to this profound expositor.

But even while that economy lasted, what does this definition make out concerning the *extent* and *force* of a man's love to his neighbour?—"As extensively and forcibly," says the writer, "as the peculiar design of the Jewish economy would permit." Captain Cook sailed as far south as the fields of ice would permit:—they stopped his progress. So, it seems, the Jews were not allowed to love one another any more than their peculiar economy could permit. In their peculiar economy they found a barrier, at which they might tack about, from love to hatred, as suddenly as Cook did when he met the fields of ice. If the expression does not imply this, it implies nothing. But, alas! since the Jewish economy is abolished, and its peculiar designs accomplished, men may now love as much or as little as they please; and love now makes no part of religion.

Let not the reader make up his mind too suddenly, that I overstrain the writer's meaning; for I will show him, before I have done, that all this is intended by this able expositor of the divine law.

Had the learned Doctor been contented with one definition, or, rather, with setting up one barrier against the letter and spirit of the law of God—had he been satisfied with limiting and abolishing the obligation of love to our neighbour, with the Jewish economy, he would simply have justified his classification with the boldest of Antinomians. But this was not enough. This duty of love to our neighbour must be narrowed down by a far more definite barrier; for, to say a man must love his neighbour as extensively and forcibly as the peculiar design of the Jewish economy would permit, leaves it vastly at random. Some people might be pleased to say that that economy required a great degree of love, whilst others affirmed it required very little. But our author settles this point by another barrier, of a very different material. "The law required," says he, "that a man should love his neighbour as extensively and forcibly as *the peculiar character of the Jewish people would permit.*"

There can be no doubt what "the peculiar character of the Jewish people" was. They were a people stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, and even during the forty days, while the law was preparing on Sinai—while, as yet, the trumpet had hardly ceased to roar, or the thunders of the voice of God to shake the earth, they revolted into open idolatry, and made an idol to lead them back to Egypt. The law of God, says this writer, required this people to love one another as much "*as their peculiar character would permit.*"

Reader, this is plain English: turn to the 104th page of the first volume, and there you will find it. But how much love did "*the peculiar character of the Jewish people permit?*" I answer NONE; for, as a people, they were a peculiarly rebellious and hardened people. To say the least, as a people they were unregenerate, and void of every degree of that love to God and each other, which his law requires.

Here is no perversion of an equivocal, or intricate sentence, and the fact, on which I predicate the allegation, is in no man-

ner constructive, but plain, simple, and obvious, for every one to read.

This exposition of the law of God, seems as much to baffle all comment, as it mocks at all comparison. Men, instead of being required to love God supremely, and their neighbour as themselves, are said to be required to love God with constant solicitude—with slavish, base, and painful anxiety, and their neighbour as much as their depraved nature and character would permit.

Before I proceed further, I think I am justified in calling upon the reader to judge for himself, whether a man who is capable of giving such an explanation of the love of God can be expected to lead the minds of his hearers into correct and just views of truth, or to convey wholesome instructions on the important doctrines of revelation. His personal friends, of which class I surely hope he is not destitute, will probably say, in his vindication, that he sometimes gives a better explanation of this grand article. Does he, indeed?—I wish he always gave a better;—one thing is certain, he cannot give a worse; and, what is peculiarly unfortunate for him, I have my eye on another similar attempt in these sermons to fritter away to nothing the obligation of *loving our neighbour as ourselves*. This precept of the law comes so fearfully near to the doctrine of disinterested benevolence, that this writer, and all others of his class, must explain it away. They hate the sight and sound of it as much as the Saracens and Turks hated the sight of a monument of Grecian architecture, and have taken as much pains to destroy it; but, as it is too massive to be undermined, they have attempted to dilapidate its columns, architraves, and pilasters, and deface its relievos and inscriptions.

The suggestion, that the Doctor sometimes explains the divine law in a less exceptionable manner, brings to my mind Sir Isaac Newton's optical doctrine of "*fits of easy transmission.*" He supposes that luminous bodies, and particularly the sun, throw out their light in certain sudden vibrations; which, instead of a better term, he is pleased to call fits of easy transmission. The Doctor, in his easy fits of transmission throws out ideas which, in general, he seems willing to conceal. He often speaks of the

infinite purity and eternal obligation of the divine law; which fine flourish leads the incautious reader or hearer into a total mistake. To love God with solicitude, and our neighbour as extensively and forcibly as the design of the Jewish economy, and the character of the Jewish people would permit, neither conveys the idea of infinite purity or eternal obligation, but rather of infinite vileness and eternal stupidity, and especially in the expositor who dares thus to degrade and annihilate the moral law.

For, admitting the law to be still in force, what is it worth requiring men to love God with solicitude, and each other as much as their depraved characters would permit? But its obligation being measured by the design of the Jewish economy, it must have been abrogated and done away with that economy. And this is the author's meaning; to establish which, is not merely once attempted, but is the great labour of his life, and aim of his public instructions.

Of what avail is a pompous concession of the infinite purity and eternal obligation of the law, after such an exposition of that law as we have before us? But, independent of this exposition, even had this writer expounded the import and spirit of the law never so correctly, his notion of the gospel places his scheme precisely on the Antinomian ground. Christ has paid the sinner's debt; taken the sinner into a mystical union with himself; made over his righteousness to the sinner; and as he is "*of full weight and measure, perfectly conformable to the law, he makes them (the sinner) just, or of full weight before God, by clothing them with his righteousness.*"

He then adds, p. 69. "*This doctrine of righteousness through a Redeemer, otherwise called the righteousness of faith, is the radical principle of revealed religion, from Genesis to Revelation.*" I put his words in italics that they may not be overlooked. And he closes this wonderful paragraph by saying, "THIS IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL."

I beg the reader to follow me with a little patience, and I will ferret the serpent from the crevices of his rock. By the serpent I do not mean the man, but his monstrous error.

Reader, you now have before you the Doctor's view of the law

and the gospel. The great precept on which hangs all the law and the prophets, under his transforming pen, is made to say, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with unceasing solicitude, i. e. *with painful and depressing* anxiety and perturbation, and thy neighbour, as much as *the design of the Jewish economy, and the depraved character of the Jewish people would permit.* And, it seems, taking them together, they permitted none at all.

His obvious motive for measuring our love to our neighbour, by the design of the Jewish economy, and the character of the Jewish people, was to exclude it wholly from the religion of Christ; accordingly, he declares, p. 69, that "*this doctrine of righteousness through a Redeemer, otherwise called the righteousness of faith, is the radical principle of revealed religion, from Genesis to Revelation, and is the substance of the Gospel.*"

In this statement of the law and gospel, I perceive a wretched specimen of the unwearied endeavours, which have for years been made in this city, to establish a loathsome system of selfishness and Antinomianism; to pervert the faith of Christians, and to sap the foundations of truth. I beg the reader to notice, that this view of these fundamental truths involves the following errors, and I shall leave him to estimate their magnitude.

1. The law of God requires no creature to love God with *solicitude.* If the Doctor mistook the meaning of the term solicitude, and thought it conveyed the idea of supreme love of God, I would recommend it to him to recall and suppress this edition of his sermons, till he can have time to study the import of language; or, at any rate, to defer publishing the remaining volumes, of which there seems to be a dignified hint in his preface, till he can peruse Johnson or Walker. I think either of these steps would save him some *solicitude.* He speaks of Christ's exact conformity to the law. I hope he does not imagine that Christ loved God with "unceasing solicitude," &c. &c.

2. The law of God required that a man love his neighbour as himself; and so far from limiting the *extensiveness* and *force* of that affection, by the peculiar design of the Jewish economy, which would suppose the duty to expire with that economy, and be vague and unmeaning while it lasted—or, by the peculiar character of the Jewish people, which would absolutely reduce it to nothing, would annihilate it altogether; the require-

ment had no relation to the Jewish economy, or character of the Jewish people. And no pretence was ever more absurd or false, than the one here set up, for the purpose of cancelling the second great command in the law, or destroying its obligation.

3. The Antinomian is known for his opposition to all moral virtue; and for setting up faith, as every thing in religion: and yet his faith, as much as he makes of it, is but a wretched patch of mysticism, and a suitable instrument of self-deception. How many degrees from this is the Doctor's idea of gospel religion? He allows the Christian no righteousness but imputed righteousness. He allows, indeed, that before man fell he was bound by an obligation of moral or personal holiness, but as a sinner he strips him of all ability—and, as a redeemed sinner, removes him infinitely distant from the department of moral virtue;—describes that whole department in the most degrading, loathsome, and sickening terms, as consisting in base and selfish love to God, and a love to men circumscribed by the narrow and perishing barriers of the Jewish economy, and the still worse character of the Jewish people: in short, he profanes the temple of rational, moral virtue and holiness, by something worse than swine's flesh; fills it with loathsome deformity, and disgusting filth, to prevent all return to it for ever—and then! most pompously declares, that the righteousness of faith is the radical principle of revealed religion, from the beginning of the Bible to the end, and the substance of the gospel.

I ask the stated hearers of this gentleman, how long it is since they have heard him, in an elaborate pulpit effort, endeavour to show that religion does not consist in *love*, but in *faith*?—in which he strove, with all his might, to make out that love to God and men is a merely legal, antiquated, Old Testament, "Jewish economy" affair?—in which he was at much pains to scatter over the fair and glorious field of moral virtue the crudities of Antinomian pollution? Many intelligent persons, who are not only judges of doctrine, but of logic and sermonizing, who may chance to see these remarks, will, I trust, remember something about that sermon.

How long shall the blind be led by the blind? How long shall prejudice and error usurp the throne of reason: nay,

usurp the awful province of divine instruction, and lead their willing votaries to remediless perdition? Reader, these are no trifles, and it looks but too much like the fearful business of groping in the dark after an unknown Saviour—like seizing some of the ghostly phantoms that glimmer there, and holding it forth as the object of faith. To make righteousness without holiness, and a religion without goodness, has ever been the desideratum of wicked men; and when any project to this effect has been set on foot, however absurd, however monstrous, it never fails of finding its advocates and admirers.

The righteousness of faith (if that phrase be properly understood) forms certainly an important article in Christian doctrine, as it refers directly to the pardon and justification of the sinner. That act of grace by which the sinner is pardoned and justified before God, will ever be remembered with eternal gratitude and praise by all the redeemed; nor will it be remembered, but in connection with its proper grounds, the atonement and work of Christ, by which alone it is brought about. But is there nothing in religion but pardon and justification?—nothing but faith by which that pardon and justification is received? It is painful to perceive how men run distracted—into what wild extremes they are hurried in pursuit of a favourite hypothesis. The redemption of a sinner is a glorious and a most gracious work of God; but the sinner is redeemed, pardoned, justified, restored, that he may become a good subject of God's great kingdom—may be reinstated in holy and perfect love forever.

There is but one true religion in God's kingdom, as there is but one law, and but one God. The moment a sinner is born again, he is in that religion; he is born into it. For he that loveth is born of God, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Faith is an important act, which rather leads to, than makes up, the body of religion. Faith can hardly be called a principle, in any sense; it is a particular act of a creature, and, as far as relates to the intellect, has for its object certain particular acts of God—I mean the work of atonement and redemption. There will be no faith in heaven; in that glorious world faith will be swallowed up in vision; and

that which in this world gives faith its moral value and excellence, is the sole consideration that it works by love, and in that way becomes holiness or virtue.

The justifying power or efficacy of faith arises from the simple consideration of its being the sinner's rational and hearty acquiescence in the salvation God has provided for the sinner. Of course, as far as the understanding is concerned, as far as faith is the mere assent to the evidence of facts, there is no more virtue in it than in any other assent to the understanding. But when the understanding believes in the record God has given of his Son, and the heart cordially receives that record, and joyfully confides in it, that faith becomes saving, because the sinner then "receives Christ, and rests upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel."

Faith does not derive its justifying, or saving power, from certain mystical qualities, or nameless properties it contains; and those who talk about the implantation of divine principles, which no mortal can conceive of, and the constitution of mystical and spiritual unions which no one can describe, deceive their hearers, if not themselves. Some idea may be formed of faith by considering its opposite, unbelief; which is in general hatred and rejection of the truth. The great object of redemption is to recover the sinner from his ruined state—to make him holy and happy; and on the sinner's part, it is necessary for him to understand the plan of redemption, or so much of it as relates immediately to his case; to approve of it in his heart, to receive it, and acquiesce in it, by obedience.

There is but one sort of holiness, or moral goodness, in God's kingdom. Creatures who have that, are like God, and are in the image of God. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Hence, as fallen man is in a state of enmity to God, and of supreme self-love, a great change is necessary to restore him to God's favour. This change is celled a second birth: a man must be born again, i. e. he must undergo an entire change of heart, from hatred to love. Hence, saith the scripture, "he that loveth is born of God, and he that loveth *not*, knoweth not God, for God is love." "And,"

saith the same apostle, "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

While the sinner perceives the nature and grounds, and appreciates the value of pardon and acceptance before God, his emotions of gratitude can be surpassed by nothing but his indescribable and overflowing love and admiration of the infinite glory and loveliness of the triune God, manifested in all ways, and by all means, before his creatures.

The notion that *faith*, or "the righteousness of faith," is the grand principle of religion, is of a piece with all the selfish scheme. It seems to intimate that the sinner cares nothing about any thing but his own salvation;—perceives nothing else, regards nothing else; while, at the same time, it renders religion an unfeeling, unmeaning system of mysticism, and contradicts the whole body of revealed truth.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Nothing can more beautifully illustrate this grand precept than the solemn declaration of an apostle of the Christian church, when we hear him say, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren:" when we hear him declaring, that "he that loveth us is born of God; nay, dwelleth in God, and God in him." This does not sound much like saying, that the law of God required a man to love his neighbour as *extensively* and *forcibly* as the design of the Jewish economy, and the character of the Jewish people would permit.

Faith, considered as the sinner's acceptance with Christ, is truly important; and the principle of pardon and justification, on the ground of Christ's merits, no Christian will be disposed to think lightly of, but, Reader, the gate of a temple is not the temple itself. Faith, pardon, justification, &c. considered in their causes, nature, grounds, and effects, open the gates of life and glory to the sinner. Christ himself says, "I am the door," &c. And this he spake, no doubt, in allusion to the sinner's pardon and acceptance with God, through him. He will be the king on his holy hill of Zion, will eternally reign in glory, and be the glorious medium of divine manifestation, to all eternity. But the religion of heaven, and of all holy creatures, will be one. And if God is love, it will be a religion of perfect love.

No mind can rise to a conception of more perfect holiness or felicity than this. It necessarily excludes all injury, and all misery; it necessarily includes all wisdom, all amiableness, all goodness, all perfection.

A moment's attention to the bible idea of religion will show, that the author of the above definition of faith, and the righteousness of faith, entertains but a scanty and miserable notion of it. I hope and trust, in the mercy of God, that the feelings of his heart contradict his theoretical definitions. Faith, as making any part of religion, is but the consequence of local circumstances, and a particular character, which will one day cease. The principle that one being is justified by the merit of another, though certainly forming a most illustrious display of divine mercy, is not a standing rule of divine government; is neither universal nor perpetual in its application; but is the method adapted by the infinite mercy of God to the recovery and restoration of sinners; who, when once restored, shall lack nothing of that personal holiness and perfect moral rectitude in which holy creatures stand before God without a mediator. Their union to, and redemption by, Christ; or, perhaps more properly, the promise and purpose of God, may secure them from the danger of a future rebellion, but will not stand them in stead for personal holiness, or moral purity.

St. Paul differs very essentially from this writer in his idea of faith, and evidently considers, and expressly declares it, inferior to charity. "Though I have *all faith*, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three—but the greatest of these is charity." O no, Paul, you are greatly mistaken for once: Dr. J. B. R. says, that faith is much the greatest.

Whether the reader will consider it as descending too low to go into verbal criticism, I cannot say, but the temptation, just at this moment, is too strong to be resisted. The Doctor says that the law requires that a man love his neighbour as *extensively* and *forcibly* as the Jewish economy would permit, &c. To love any person *extensively* is a phrase not very easy to understand, unless he means from *head to foot*. A man travels extensively, sees extensively, &c.; but I never saw any person who loved extensively. Perhaps he refers to some

practice under the Jewish economy. But when he tells about loving *forcibly*, I am utterly beat; it seems to resemble an assault *vi et armis*. Among all the fervid and rapturous phrases of chivalry, I believe it was never thought of. I have heard of loving sincerely—ardently—vastly—distractedly—outrageously—terribly—infinitely—but never FORCIBLY.

I shall close this number by considering a mistake, which the Doctor says some believers fall into; and that in few words. He says, vol ii. p. 280. "*The mistake under which some believers* (meaning Hopkinsians) *labour is, that it is not lawful to regard our personal interest in matters of religion, any further than the value which we possess in the scale of being; or, in other words, that we must be willing, if our value be so low, to relinquish our personal interest, and with it our all, for those who possess more value than ourselves.*"

If any person by reading this, can tell what the *mistake* is, I shall be glad. Does he mean that some believers have adopted a false rule of valuation, and that this is their mistake? He lays down no rule: he poises their personal interest against their comparative value. He puts things on opposite sides of the fulcrum which ought to be on the same side. What is the mistake of some believers? Why, they say, "it is not lawful to regard our personal interest, in matters of religion, any further than the value which we possess in the scale of being." It seems, then, that *it is lawful to regard our personal interest* FURTHER *than our value*, &c. But this means nothing. What does he mean by "*further*," an adverb of place or locality? The sentence is unintelligible. Did ever any one institute comparison between his personal interest and his value in the scale of being? Is there a child who does not know that they are equal? It is a comparison between *himself* and *himself*. Yet this metaphysician has found out that a believer whose value is equal, say, to ten thousand, may regard his personal interest "*further*," i. e. at 15 or 20 thousand; and he is under "a mistake" if he does not do it. A queer mistake! This eternal squinting at self-interest, through logic, and through absurdity—through thick and thin, I abhor.

I know of but one correct rule of valuation, and that is to

them to give a just and equitable decision, for fear of being thought "vain, arrogant, and assuming," by all who understand human nature. "A Warburton in controversy!!!"

On page 282, the Doctor is so good as to tell us whence this mistake orignates. A very clever thing in him.

"The mistake of which I am speaking," says he, "originates in the idea that virtue or holiness consists, not in choosing and performing every duty in its place, but merely in the love of being, in general." An origin worty of the "mistake!" I ask the reader, in what respect these two definitions of virtue are inconsistent with each other? Does not he who loves being, in general, *perform every duty in its place?*—and who so likely as he to do it? Does not God love being, in general? God is love;—but love must have an object; and what does God love? Is not the love of being a duty in every Christian?—and does not he who loves being, in general, do that duty "*in its place?*" And does not he who loves God, and angels, and men—yea, his friends, and his enemies, do all these duties in their places? What duty, my good Doctor, is not included in love; since love worketh no ill to his neighbour, and is the fulfilling of the law? But, Reader, Reader, the secret of all this metaphysical bungling, and Jesuitical twisting, for argument it cannot be called, still lies behind. There is, in all this harangue about the "mistake," no case stated—nothing made plain—nothing refuted—no mistake discoverable at the mast-head with a first-rate spy-glass. Though supremely miserable and contemptible in point of argument, as every reader must perceive, there was a design in it; which design did not fail of its effect. The design was to impress the minds of the hearers of that sermon, that certain people held to monstrous errors:—to make them believe that these people pretend to carry about them "a graduated scale," to measure every one's value by; that when they have found that one man is more valuable than another, they pretend that the man of minor valne must, of course, surrender up all his religious rights or interest to him who is of superior value; and that without any apparent motive, reason, cause, or provocation, but merely because the other is of most value.

And for the origin of this wondrous "mistake," what is it?

Why, some people hold that virtue does not consist *in doing every duty in its place*, but in *the love of being, in general.* Gog and Magog! what metaphysics. Suppose the love of being, in general, is a duty, do they not do it in its place? Does not he who loves God supremely, and his neighbour as himself, love being, in general, and do duty in its place? And will any one deny that that is the first of all duties? Whoever does that, does the sum of duty, for love is the fulfilling of the law. From whom are we to expect the performance of duty in the detail, if not from him who is thoroughly imbued in the first grand principles of duty and virtue?

"Since, then," continues the Doctor, p. 284, "it is obviously impracticable to ascertain the precise value of different persons, why should we tamper with the moral sensibilities of our nature, by making our impartial love to them the test and evidence of a gracious state?" Was ever a declaration so barefaced, or so impious? More than this could scarcely have been expected from the pen of Thomas Paine. It is an open and bold attack on the law of God.

"Since, then." The reader perceives this to be an inference. But what conclusion does he draw from what premises? He had been arguing that some were in a mistake, because they supposed that a little being must give up all his interest to a great one, merely on account of his superiority; and without giving the reader a glimpse of any rational opinion ever held by any mortal, or confuting it by one rational argument: in short, he effectually tangles down three or four pages of words and sentences, and only enables the reader to conjure out the idea, that he is trying to overthrow some horrible Hopkinsian error, and then comes this inference, in nowise connected with any thing preceding, that since we cannot measure the value of beings, therefore we must not tamper with the sensibilities of our nature by making impartial love to our neighbour an evidence of grace. He that loves his neighbour *as himself* loves him *impartially*, and the phrase can mean nothing else. All this senseless jargon of several pages has for its sole object to destroy this precept of the law; since he begins, by saying, that precept required a man to love his neighbour as

extensively and forcibly as the design of the Jewish economy, and the character of the Jewish people, would permit: a complete annihilation of it, as to Christians; and closes by declaring, that, to require a man to love his neighbour impartially, is a useless tampering with the sensibilities of his nature.

If this is not tampering with the law of God, I do not understand the meaning of the term.

I trust I have redeemed my pledge, in relation to my first allegation, to wit, that correct instructions are not given in the triangular pulpits of the city. Far be it from me to say that they preach no truth. Their sermons are not without excellent paragraphs; and these occur, as observed in a former number, when, forgetting themselves and their theories, they give a loose to their better feelings, and break fairly out of the triangle. They then are known sometimes to tamper with a man's selfish sensibilities, so far as to point out to him his duty, his obligations, his danger, and his remedy. But so long as they preserve self-consistency, and keep to the triangle, no matter whether it be scalene, isosceles, equilateral, or rectangular, their instructions are incorrect.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. IV.

A Letter, addressed to two distinguished members of the Jersey Presbytery, the Rev. Dr. ———, and the Rev. Dr. ———:

Rev. Sirs,

Though the reign of superstition and astrology is past away, and, with it, the belief of fortunate and unfortunate days, yet you have doubtless observed, that states and empires, and the most important institutions, both civil and religious, have their crises, their moments of highest interest and import, on which their destiny turns, and from which may be traced their misfortunes or felicity—their prosperity or decline. I cannot but feel

strongly persuaded, and by indications which to me appear indubitable, that the days now passing are critical and momentous to the interests and future prospects of the Presbyterian Church in America, of which you are distinguished members. If it should be doubted whether the present time affords any indications which are specially ominous, my impressions still derive some support from the broader ground that every day, and all times, are important in their influence on all temporal institutions, which are seldom stationary, but are always waxing or waning in their interest and prosperity.

The origin and progress, the situation and prospects, of the Presbyterian church in this country, are happy beyond all example, and present, to the contemplative mind, an object beyond all parallel in the annals of time. I say nothing to the disparagement of other churches; and there are others for which I feel a high respect, and a sincere affection; and I most cordially congratulate them in the enjoyment of equal privileges and pleasing prospects.

The Presbyterian church, in her origin, resembles that of the nation in which she is embosomed, and under whose umbrageous boughs she enjoys protection and repose. And if by her origin is intended the form she now bears, the same generation witnessed both events, and is not yet past away. As to her progress, it will be sufficient to say, she now embraces several Synods, and between thirty and forty Presbyteries. The Minutes of the General Assembly now lie before me, in which I perceive that thirty-two Presbyteries attended her last session.

Her origin and progress have been pacific—have resulted solely from the influence of sentiment, and the progress of conviction. And I adore and bless God, that she has been as far from the disposition as the ability to increase her numbers by coercion, or enforce her principles by the arm of civil power. Her situation, as far as temporal things are concerned, promises every thing which can be the rational objects of hope and expectation. Extending through the fairest climates, she embraces a respectable portion of the inhabitants of the city and the wilderness, and she connects these extremes through intermediate towns and flourishing villages over a wide country. Her tem-

poral interests are rising with the fortunes and resources of a young, enterprising, and prosperous nation.

But her ultimate prosperity depends on far other and higher considerations. Whatever may be the increase of her wealth and numbers, her decline will commence with the decline of holiness and vital religion—with the decline of sound doctrine and Christian discipline. Her prosperity, therefore, is essentially connected with the effectual influence of the spirit of God, in the conversion of souls, and the addition of her numbers of persons of that description. Hitherto she has been highly favoured, even in this respect; and as far as we can judge, or have a right to judge, Christ himself has been her light—has walked in the midst of his golden candlesticks, and has supplied them with holy oil and heavenly fire.

This Church, spreading her branches to the east and west, and north and south, resembles "a tree planted by the rivers of waters;" and when the prospects of her future enlargement, grounded on the rising fortunes of this yet infant nation, and the encouragement to hope that God will bless and prosper her, are considered, her friends and children cannot but rejoice, and ascribe glory to the Redeemer, who has, in so short a period, caused the wilderness and the solitary place to blossom like the rose.

This institution, so young and beautiful, so flourishing and fair—whose towering height, majestic form, and just proportion, are discernible from distant parts of the earth, is viewed by other eyes than those of children born into the kingdom of light and peace—than those of friends who "prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy;" and whose most fervent prayer is, that "peace may be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces." Other desires are awakened than those which seek only God's glory advanced in the salvation of souls, and in the spiritual welfare of Christ's church. Eyes burning with ambition, and aching in search of the slightest elevation, as a footing to begin to scale the steep and slippery ascent, are now scrutinizing her avenues, attempting her thresholds, and knocking at her doors.

I shall leave you, gentlemen, to judge for yourselves what in-

roads they have made upon "liberties" so anxiously spied out already—what avenues they have explored—what posts and stations they have seized; or whether there has been any thing like this, or nothing at all. But you surely will not find fault with the assertion, that such things are soon to be expected in the natural course of events; and judging from all past experience, and, shall I say, present appearances, must now be in their incipient state.

"It seems very reasonable to believe," says Dr. Witherspoon, "that as human things are never at a stand, a church and nation, in a quiet and peaceable state, is always growing insensibly worse, till it be either so corrupt as to deserve and procure exterminating judgments, or, in the infinite mercy of God, by some great shock or revolution, is brought back to simplicity and purity, and reduced, as it were, to its first principles." This remark, made by that great writer, in application to the church of Scotland, cannot be questioned; and is justified by the history of all churches and nations, and by none more than that of the primitive church.

This deterioration of nations and churches often proceeds by slow and imperceptible degrees, and springs from latent causes. Nothing is more arduous than an attempt to stay its progress; it is like resisting the force of a mighty torrent, because, as the same writer observes, whoever goes so far as to intimate his belief that a church is progressing in corruption, will not fail to draw upon himself the resentment of all the abettors of that corruption. Indeed, the disease must be demonstrated before the methods of cure can be exhibited. And those who are corrupt themselves, and busily and zealously employed in spreading that corruption, will not fail to vindicate themselves by whatever weapons come in their way.

Nor is the progress of error and corruption always slow: a generation quickly arose that knew not Joseph. And we see, in sacred history, the same congregation who adored, and worshipped, and covenanted, before the dreadful glories of the God of Israel on Mount Sinai, but a few months after paying vile homage to a golden calf, even at the foot of that mountain.

I shall neither shun nor justify any inferences that may be

supposed to arise from this general strain of observations. Charity hopeth all things; and I fervently hope that there is not a general prevalence of corruption in the church. But there are certain local facts which are calculated to excite alarm—which, I trust, you will not think unworthy of your consideration.

Knowing whom I address, I deem it needless to spend time in definitions or nice distinctions. For several years past there has been, in various places, an increasing opposition to the strain of doctrine and sentiments commonly denominated Hopkinsian. At the present time, or within a few months, ground has been taken on that subject, at which, all those who generally adhere to that doctrine, are greatly alarmed and shocked. Direct information has been given, in the form of accusation, against several young men, holding those sentiments, with a view to impede their settlement, and prevent their preaching in certain places.

One has been informally cited to appear before his Presbytery, though at a great distance, to answer to the charge of preaching heresy. And I need only say, that the sentiments he preached are such as you, gentlemen, have been preaching and maintaining for many years, and that with power and success. A whole synod has made a firm stand, and boldly and expressly condemned Hopkinsianism, as "heresy, and that whereby the enemy of souls would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect."

Corresponding with these particular acts, a combined and extensive influence has been used, and is using, to give the public mind a general sentiment of abhorrence and indignation against that strain of doctrine. And these methods of opposition have been used, with great effect, in many places, by which a tone of feeling has been wrought up, of a grade but a little below direct, vigorous, and organized persecution.

It will be easy to say, that no person need profess himself to be a Hopkinsian, or expose himself to this kind of censure and opposition. And it is certainly true, that I have never called myself by that name, nor do I know of any class of people who have ever styled themselves so.

But, gentlemen, the spirit of this controversy aims not at

words, but truths. There are three or four grand characteristics of doctrine at which the whole weight and violence of this storm are pointed. The man who comes out in *these*, is at once branded as a Hopkinsian, and, as you see, condemned as a heretic. These points are general atonement, the offer of salvation to all—a probationary state—moral depravity, or inability, or laying the bar to the sinner's salvation wholly in his will; and a religion above all selfishness. You would even be surprised to know that for advancing any of these points, for even so much as once condemning selfishness, and setting up God's glory above all creature considerations, a man is accused of many dangerous and latent errors—of heresy. Let him but advance the idea, that the sinner is barred from salvation by his own voluntary rejection:—let him but invite all men to come to Christ, assuring them there is full provision, and he falls irrevocably under all this censure and obloquy.

Be not misled by the supposition, that this opposition is levelled at any of Hopkins', or Emmons', or any other man's peculiar notions, with which you yourselves might chance to differ. No, Gentlemen, the opposition is aimed at the grand pillars of that noble and imperishable frame of doctrine which you have laboured, through all your years, to establish and propagate; doctrines, which I am consoled, and more happy than I can express, to say, you have often seen attended with demonstration of the spirit, and with power, under your own labours, and among your respective flocks:—doctrines, in whose efficacy and saving influence many of your hearers will rejoice with you to eternity.

It is somewhat rare, that any of our young men, or old men, have entered into any of the peculiar distinctions, or sentiments, advocated by certain ministers at the eastward. It is not common that close trains of metaphysical reasoning have been resorted to, either here, or further south, by those censured as Hopkinsians. They have generally confined themselves to plain and simple discussions of the most important truths.

Yet, such are the consequences, and such things a day has brought forth. It is for you, Reverend and beloved Sirs, to consider whether the evil has not grown to be of sufficient magnitude

and induced a state of things to require some remedy. As an individual, I think I can distinctly foresee, that if neglected, it will soon mock at all remedy. If long neglected, it will rise like a giant from its cradle, and it will crush, without distinction, those who cherished it by their neglect, and those who brought it forth, by a tedious gestation and parturition.

I surely need not call your attention to the fact, that the founders of the Presbyterian church had no intention of making this strain of doctrine a breaking point; and unless I am much misinformed, some persons of this description were among the very men that reared the fabric into its present form. However that may be, the general assembly has never convened, since her formation, without members of those sentiments on the floor. None of the judicatories of the church, as I have heard, ever were so intolerant as to think of refusing, or delaying, ministers, licentiates, or candidates, on that ground: and in the general assembly itself there has, for years, been perpetual representations of the New-England churches, the common scource, and radiating point, whence those doctrines spread.

Among the unhappy effects likely to result from the measures recently taken, we may well consider the gloomy prospects which threatened to spread over the whole body of professing Christians in the United States. How terrible and shocking the thought that Christian brethren, friends, and neighbours, united for years in the strictest bounds of amity, must be severed under the charge of heresy. Many churches must be torn and agitated with fierce disputes, and probably rent asunder; churches must be cast out of Presbyteries, and, perhaps, Presbyteries out of Synods. And what appearance would the Presbyterian church make, torn with divisions, distracted by disputes, rent with schisms, palsied by animosities, and branded with the name of a persecutor?

I need not conjecture what your feelings would be, Gentlemen, oppressed, grieved, agitated, in the contemplation of such a wide scene of desolation, misery, and ruin. All connexion with our northern and eastern brethren must fall a sacrifice to this fierce demon of blind persecuting rage. Nor are they alone branded with the odious and shameful epithet of heretics.

Other denominations, even Episcopalians and Methodists, and all who in any way have incurred the appellation of Arminians, are also to be abhorred and contemptuously put under the ban of heresy. The stern eye of detestation is to be turned upon them; the finger of scorn pointed at them; the lip of pride and religious bigotry are to pronounce, "There is an Arminian heretic—a Hopkinsian heretic."

No more are ministers from the Congregational churches of New England, or licentiates from the same quarter, to come into the bounds of the Presbyterian church, and to be received with open arms, and affectionate welcomes into our judicatories, unless they abjure the doctrines of their fathers, and shrink themselves into the sharp and narrow limits of the triangle: from which may heaven preserve them; although it cannot but be present to the mind of every one how great a number of the ministers now within the bounds of the General Assembly originated from that quarter.

But, Gentlemen, perhaps, yea doubtless, this wall of separation between us and them will be considered by some as desirable. Will it be so esteemed by you? Perhaps the arrival and establishment of ministers from those churches, now called heretics, will no longer be thought necessary or consistent with Presbyterian policy. Perhaps it will be said that we now have an established ministerial seminary, therefore it is time that the streams from that northern fountain were dried up. Sooner may the River Euphrates be dried up, and the way of the kings of the east be prepared. But at the name of a ministerial seminary, more extensive prospects and surprising thoughts rush upon my mind.

Are we, Gentlemen, to understand that young men educated for the church in that seminary are to be imbued in this intolerance of spirit—are to be sent forth to preach down Hopkinsian heresy? I seem to be under both a natural and a moral inability to believe it; and yet the difference of latitude between them and Philadelphia is fearfully small. If a great divine in Philadelphia has placed Hopkins himself in hell; if the whole synod of Philadelphia have denounced his doctrine as heresy,

I fear for all the surrounding atmosphere of that region:—it has a murky appearance, when seen from a distance.

Analogical reasoning is never demonstrative, and sometimes fallacious; yet I find it difficult to believe that even the late act of that Synod could have arisen without some influence and countenance *ab extra*. But from an event so sudden, so unexpected, so shocking, so contrary to the whole tenor and maxims of the Presbyterian church, as well as of the present age, I scarcely know what to think or what to look for next. But of one thing I am assured: if this decision of the Philadelphia Synod is, in truth, to be considered as the prevailing voice of the Presbyterian church, as a body, she is ruined.

If sound policy be worthy of consideration, never was act more impolitic than to excite the contempt and derision of immense numbers of people, and that without the prospect of answering one valuable purpose thereby. You, gentlemen, will perceive how this rash denunciation may operate, in various ways, against the increase and prosperity of this whole church; and you know that great events turn on small pivots. Will people who are considered as *Arminians*, or *Hopkinsians*, when they see themselves by this public official ukase condemned and stigmatized as heretics, feel an inclination to unite with presbyterianism? Will they view them as a lovely, amiable, affectionate, and generous class of people, with whom a union would be desirable, aside from all sentiments? Will they be likely to listen to their arguments, commencing with a bull of excommunication? It was precisely thus the haughty prelates of Rome treated Luther, when arraigned before them for his trial. Their first argument was, that he was a damnable heretic, and must abjure his sentiments, or meet his doom. This was not metaphysical.

Does it sound well for an august Synod of Christian ministers to address a letter to all their churches, announcing that a set of heretics were amongst them, and must be forthwith extirpated and exterminated? Who can read this, and not perceive, that, if those ghostly lords had but the arm of the civil power to enforce their decree, there would be additional clauses? Gentlemen, this business has more of the smell of fire about it than

the garments of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego, after they came out of the furnace.

But if this act be impolitic, it is no less unjust. For I ask, were such men as Dr. Watts and Richard Baxter heretics? Men are condemned as heretics for holding precisely the same general strain of sentiments. It is not singular and particular tenets; it is for holding the great and scripture doctrine of a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world," moral depravity, &c. as already stated. The authors of the Pastoral Letter well know that there are multitudes in the communion of the Presbyterian church who hold to these sentiments, and would lay down their necks on the block before they would abandon them, and add their names to the glorious catalogue of martyrs for the truth. Are all these to be anathematized as heretics, and proceeded against as such, unless they abjure their sentiments? The requisition would be as unjust as the revocation of the edict of Nantz, and ought to stand recorded on the same page of the history of persecutions. It does not equally affect men's property, but is equally levelled at the liberties of conscience.

The attempt to justify this measure by an appeal to our confession of faith, and by alleging that these men differ with that confession, you well know, gentlemen, how to appreciate. For myself, I consider it, not as the voice of the syren, which is said to be pleasant, but as the roaring of a lion who has of old "learned to catch prey and devour men;" it is the voice of bigotry and intolerance; it is the universal and everlasting watch-word against improvement and reform. "The form of sound words," that scripture phrase, for ever pressed into the same inglorious service, is much insisted on in this Pastoral Letter, and the pointed meaning it is used to convey ought to be sickening to every Christian and man of sense. I call to your mind, gentlemen, that it is not many centuries since Gallileo and Copernicus were condemned, because they had departed from "the form of sound words," viz. for teaching what they had discovered in natural philosophy, that the sun stood still, and the earth revolved.

In subscribing to the confession of faith, my views were, I

trust, not dissimilar to the views of those who compiled it. I viewed it as a noble system of doctrine, but as the work of fallible men, and, of course, by no means infallible or perfect, or to be regarded as divine law. I had never any idea of substituting it for the word of God, or laying it by the side of the sacred oracles, as of paramount authority, at which all inquiry was to stop, and disputation cease. I found myself perfectly supported in these impressions of that book, by the preface to the first edition, if I mistake not, in which this is frankly, and in the most ingenuous manner, declared. It was never in the dreams of its authors to set it up as the sovereign arbiter of conscience; or that any deviation from any points therein contained were to be stigmatized as deviations from the eternal standard of truth, or subject those who deviated to censure and excommunication.

I confess I have been of late frequently shocked and disgusted by perceiving, on certain occasions, all reference to any higher authority dropped, and solemn reference made to that, as if clothed with supreme authority, and imposing irrefragable obligation—as "to the law and to the testimony." I say, I have been shocked as often as I have seen any propensity to such a course since the doctrine of human infallibity has been sufficiently abused, and, I should imagine, sufficiently exposed and derided.

You, gentlemen, cannot but be aware of the impossibility and absurdity of setting up any human standard, by which immense numbers of people, learned or unlearned, shall square down their faith to every sentence and sentiment of it, even to every jot and tittle. And could such a point be achieved, which yet never was, since men were on the earth, and which, from the very nature of the human mind, is impossible, it could be desirable upon no other supposition than that of the absolute perfection of the standard. But where the system, dignified by the name of *standard*, is confessedly the work of fallible men, and, of course, may fail of rectitude in various respects, it would be as useless as impracticable, as absurd as impossible, to procure an absolute unqualified assent to all its parts and particles from every member of the church.

And what would be the consequence, if certain individuals

should come to a firm and conscientious conviction, that certain parts of it were wrong, but were still willing, nevertheless, to abide by it as their confession of faith? And such cases will often happen. The history of all churches will answer this question. Let the history of the Greek, Roman, English, Scottish, and Genevan churches answer. These unhappy men must be persecuted for conscience sake, and their names cast out as evil. Thus did Calvin himself: and while, as yet, the unhallowed thunders of Rome had not done murmuring round his head, he is drawing the cord of spiritual tyranny round the people of Geneva, and violently squaring down every man's conscience to his own views. But the objector will say, Ah, Calvin was right, and, therefore, might resort to such measures. Yes—yes—Calvin was right, and his object was to force every one to be right also, or he would serve them as he did Servetus.

A reference to the authority and practice of the church of Scotland, so highly sanctified, in the view of some persons, gives no relief to my fears, and reflects no happy light on our future destinies. Rather may heaven deliver us from following in the rocky paths that church has trod: and I will only say, she is most eulogized by those who know the least about her, and, on no account, is a model for us to follow. It is true, that neither a pope nor a monarch has been her head, but that has not always prevented her from being a hydra, and a haughty invader of the rights of conscience. She has felt the influence of an aristocracy as dark and foggy, as bleak and barren, as her rugged mountains and leafless hills.

I am not ignorant of the merits of the church of Scotland. They can boast of great and illustrious men, whose names will be among the brightest ornaments of literature, and whose usefulness and fame, as ministers of Christ, have rarely been surpassed in modern Europe. Nor do I deny the merits of their doctrine or discipline, as comprehending a noble body of theoretical and practical wisdom. May we be able to copy their excellencies, and shun their defects.

It would be presumption in me, gentlemen, to undertake to suggest a course of conduct to you in the present juncture of affairs; and useless to attempt to conjecture what course you

will pursue. That a new comet has appeared on our horizon, whose motions are rapid, and aspects malign, I think you will not deny; since every eye can see it without a telescope. It matters not whether you say you are Hopkinsians or not; you may, indeed, say, that you are not; for, as I have repeatedly said, I have seen but few persons, in my day, who chose to adopt that title. The strain of doctrine in which I myself believe I know, perfectly well, neither was derived directly or indirectly from Hopkins, and it is very probable you can safely say as much. Our licentiates are accused of heresy, and driven from places where there had been flattering prospects of speedy and agreeable settlements, under cruel and unjust imputations; and the synod of Philadelphia has raised the cry of heresy against the whole strain of doctrine.

Far be it from me to wish to abridge the right of individuals, or of public bodies, of promoting the scheme of doctrine they approve of; or of opposing, by just argumentation, what they dislike. And I know too well your liberality of sentiment, and magnanimity of soul, not to be sensible that you take equal pleasure in receiving and giving charitable and Christian indulgence. There is a pleasure in this mutual forbearance which infinitely transcends the gratification of the stern bigot while he binds the conscience, the lord of our actions—and fetters the tongue, the glory of our frame.

But as I little expected to hear the heaviest and last censure of the church hurled at the sentiments which, from my soul, I believe to be the eternal truth of God, so, neither do I believe that you, gentlemen, can hear the awful reverberation of these thunders, though rolling at a distance, without inward horror and astonishment. I presume you will not dissent from me in the opinion, that it is a time of darkness and mourning. The language of prophecy represents the fall of states, nations, and churches, by the darkening of the luminaries of heaven. I do not say that this church has fallen, but I say that a third part of the stars of heaven are eclipsed; and if this spirit of intolerance and persecution shall prevail, and maintain her ground in this church, her fall is near.

I have neither said, nor conceded by implication, that the

strain of doctrine commonly styled Hopkinsian differs, in any material point, from our confession of faith; although the Synod of Philadelphia express an ardent hope, that "the time may never come when *those doctrines*, and *our confession of faith*, shall be considered as one and the same thing;" but I do say, and I do feel an irresistible conviction of its truth, that to expect a perfect coincidence of opinion in every article and idea of this, or any other confession of faith or creed, of equal extent and particularity from any considerable number of people, is to expect an impossibility. Such expectations, if serious, can be the offspring of nothing but ignorance or prejudice. To require such a coincidence, as a term of admittance or continuance in the church, would be madness, and would not fail of consequences the most deleterious to the whole body. Unities of that kind are not to be expected, unless the days shall return when men are willing to sell their consciences to the mother of harlots, for the privilege of drinking the cup of her abominations; or, unless the morning shall break forth when creeds, confessions of faith, formularies, and liturgies, some more and some less excellent, but all imperfect, shall vanish before the sun of righteousness, in the glory of the latter day.

An overt act of impolicy, in one of the highest judicatories of the church, whatever might be its nature and tendency, cannot be viewed but with concern by every benevolent mind, however disinterested or remote. But to such as are deeply interested in the welfare of the church; to such as desire nothing more sincerely than its purity and prosperity, its peace and edification, it must cause emotions of deep regret and solicitude. But when the nature of the measure is such that its impolicy is forgotten in its injustice and cruelty; when we turn from the generous sensibility of the disinterested spectator; from the painful sensations of those whose chief enjoyment arises from the peace and prosperity of the church, what estimate are we to form of the feelings of those who are the victims of this measure, and in a moment to be prostrated by this rigorous sentence? We will suppose him a young man just engaged in the sacred work of the ministry; and engaged with all his heart, and all his talents, to promote the truth, according

to his best views, and to preach the gospel as the instrument of turning souls to righteousness. But suddenly he is accused of preaching heresy, and the accusation brought home, and his condemnation rendered irretrievable by the majestic voice of an entire Synod. To these circumstances add the rage and triumph of his enemies; the disappointment, sorrow, and anguish of his friends; the interest that will be awakened in his favour, by those that can feel pity and commiseration; the arrows of malignity, that will pursue him as a heretic, apostate, hypocrite, and deceiver. What are we to think of such a situation?

Or we will suppose him among the venerable Fathers whose whitened locks and bending form show that his labours are nearly past; and that he is about to appear before the Chief Shepherd. He is condemned as an heretic, and must abjure the doctrines he has preached for many years, and of the correctness of which he has not a remaining doubt, or must go to his grave, not from the portals of the church on earth, in which he has long and successfully laboured; but as an outcast, a vagrant, a leprous amputated member, too corrupt to be preserved or healed, must drop into a solitary grave, to rest in disgraceful oblivion, or to live in the execrations and calumnies of remembrance.

And when I consider what numbers in the visible communion of this church are thoroughly and conscientiously imbued in this strain of doctrine, thus rashly condemned; when I reflect on the spirit of toleration and Christian liberty so gloriously risen on the present age, like a phœnix from the ashes of former times, but now abused and insulted before the sun; when I consider the immense and venerable body of clergy to the north and east deeply implicated in this act, and condemned by this sentence; when I know that these have been the doctrines of revivals, sanctioned by the spirit of God in the conversion of thousands of souls, I shudder in view of this act—I tremble for its consequences—I fear for its perpetrators.

Gentlemen, you surely will not differ with me when I assert, that if God has ever made bare his arm for the salvation of souls, through the instrumentality of truth, it has been under the preach-

ing of these doctrines. If, since our forefathers first touched these western shores, a blessing has descended from the Redeemer's throne to his church in this new world, it has been under the ministrations of these truths. I leave it, therefore, for all mankind to judge, how far the condemnation of these doctrines may be considered as "fighting against God."

If an act so contrary to the liberal and charitable dictates of religious toleration, which has broke forth with splendour on the present age, and with so much honour and felicity to the church of Christ, shall incur the just contempt and reproaches of men, how much more dreadful will be His displeasure, before whom all nations are as nothing, when those who aspire to the blessings of his covenant, dare to affix the seal of their impious curse on those doctrines on which he has fixed the seal of his high and unchangeable approbation.

Merciful God! in the day of thy visitations, O remember not our iniquities against us, for thou knowest we are but dust!

To put the best face on things they will bear, and the most favourable construction that apathy itself can propose, or the most calm, unsullied and charitable mind can think possible, let us suppose that none of the violent consequences anticipated will follow these gloomy indications of intolerance and persecution; let us suppose that this act of the Philadelphia Synod, and these collateral measures, to keep a certain strain of preaching, and certain men, out of the great capitals, Philadelphia and New-York, are merely designed as present and local remedies; let it be supposed that men of standing and established views, though holding this strain of doctrine, will never be molested, or an attempt made to drive them from their stations—what then? Is this a complete salvo for all that appears;—a soporific on which the friend of evangelical truth can slumber on in security? What will be the amount of this? And whither does this index of hope point, as the end of all troubles? It points, gentlemen, to this: that henceforth no minister or licentiate is to gain admittance into any Presbyterian vacancy unless he can be chopped down perfectly into the *three-square* shape; nor is any one to remain there, unless stretched or clipped to the due length of the iron bedstead; especially if in, or near,

any place of distinction. Perhaps, indeed, some few, in the bosom of solitudes, or defiles of mountains, will not be pursued and hunted out by Dr. Buckram's letters missive;—perhaps some, here and there one, seated in alpine declivities and fastnesses—housed by glaciers, and surrounded by grottoes—cradled by tempests, and serenaded by cataracts—curtained by the wilderness, and fraternized with wild buffaloes, may be let alone awhile; but I aver, however venerable and well established—however pious, and however able, if placed in a conspicuous station—if the eyes of Argus can discover a crevice in his wall, or the hands of Briareus can enter the bar—if the Cyclops can forge a bar long enough, or the Titans can sway it down, they will pry him up, and work him out at last.

In the mean time, the friends of truth, scouted and distressed, scattered and discouraged, will disappear, or, perhaps, some will be won over, by smiles, titles, or promotion. Ministers and licentiates from the New-England states will perceive every avenue of the Presbyterian church shut against them as heretics, and will turn their eyes towards other fields, where the ground is not pre-occupied by opposition. And fields of vast extent are indeed before them. As for our theological seminary, it will be in the hands of men who will imbue, if possible, every candidate whom they shall instruct and send forth, in a deep abhorrence of the "Hopkinsian heresy;" and every one will go forth under a full impression that he must beat down the odious doctrine of disinterested benevolence, and erect selfishness on its ruin.

For precisely the same reason that this narrow and illiberal scheme of doctrine is vindicated, as making a part of what is called our *standard*, every sentiment differing from this scheme, be it more or less important, will be condemned, and, with imposing confidence, censured as repugnant to our confession of faith. The advocates of error will not be slow to arm themselves with ecclesiastical censures; and spiritual thunders will be hurled, without discrimination, at "the Hopkinsian heresy," and all who embrace it.

I wish it were in my power to say that the Synod of Philadelphia is the only ecclesiastical body which has already acted

upon this plan: would that my fears were of that ideal class which relate to evils merely possible or probable. But has not this humiliating scene been acted over much nearer home? And have you not seen, Gentlemen, a Presbytery very recently refuse to put the call of a highly respectable congregation into the hands of a young clergymen of exemplary piety and handsome talents; at the remonstrance of a very small minority of that congregation, comprising not more than one fifth of the people, or of the property of the congregation, when it was well known that their only objection to him was that he was a Hopkinsian?

It is true this very considerable minority, *legis fictione*, were instructed not to expose the nature of their objection against Mr. G—— before the Presbytery, i. e. *in foro ecclesiæ;* but it is equally true, that every member of that Presbytery, and in *foro conscientiæ*, knew perfectly well it was because he was a *Hop*, as, in their dignified style, they called him. Moreover, *legis fictione*, this Presbytery were not to know the grounds of the objection of this one-fifth minority to Mr. G——. It was quite enough for them that one-fifth objected against him, while the urgent and importunate request of four-fifths was rejected; and Mr. G—— himself was rejected, "*sine delicto, sine crimine, sine mali sensu.*"

This congregation appealed to the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey for relief from this oppressive act; and to the honour of that body be it spoken, the Synod reversed the decision of that Presbytery, and restored to the congregation their right of calling Mr. G—— to be their minister. But did it end here? Are the congregation and church now allowed to sit down in the quiet enjoyment of their dearest and most sacred rights? What do we next see? A large body of the Synod, headed by the very man whom the General Assembly has set at the head of the Theological Seminary, and, what is remarkable, the man who has endeavoured to distinguish himself as a friend to republican principles and the rights of mankind, rose and entered their solemn protest against this decision of the Synod, and encouraged the Presbytery to appeal to the General Assembly, which they accordingly did. This protest and appeal to the

General Assembly, whatever pretences may be set up, must be grounded on two grand principles:

1. It is of no importance for a Presbytery to know what the nature of the objection of a minority may be against a minister. If they object merely, it is enough. And as I said above, it will often happen, *legis fictione*, that they must not know, i. e. pretend to know, what it is. This principle was expressly set up, before the Synod, by the learned leader of the protest. He said, that a Presbytery was under no obligation to "pump and sift out the objections of a minority" to a minister. Would it not have been more appropriate to the case, had he said, They had better draw the curtain close, and keep every thing snug, than to talk about *pumping* and *sifting*. The Presbytery was far from a disposition to pump and sift; it was more their object to conceal and hide.

2. The other principle, on which this protest and appeal are grounded is, that a majority of voices, even of five to one, ought not to be the governing principle with a Presbytery; that though four-fifths of a church and congregation, holding also four-fifths of the property, desire leave to call a minister, and although the nature of the objection of the other fifth is wholly unknown, yet, in such a case, the Presbytery have a right to resist the call. These are the principles of the champions of liberty. And had there been three instead of two, I should have compared them to the three frogs which came out of the mouth of the dragon, beast, and false prophet: for they were doubtless as unclean. I appeal to the unbiassed sense and discernment of the public, and to the common sense of mankind, whether it be reasonable or decorous that a minority should object to a man, and not tell the world, and the court before whom that objection is brought, what that objection is. And as to the grand question, whether a majority have a right to govern, to say nothing of other nations, or of man's inalienable rights, it is the great law of this nation, I may say, both in church and state. Any principle or rule set up to abolish this law, will not fail to create a most odious tyranny. But when a majority mounts up to four or five to one, both in numbers and property; when the resistance of the minority is so feeble as not even to allege any

accusation, or to table any objection of an explicit form, the Presbytery that shall crush and silence that majority, and listen to such a minority, usurp a power with which no man, or body of men, on earth are clothed by the word of God.

Moreover, I appeal to the same august tribunal, that the form of opposition employed by the minority against Mr. G——, nay, the very nature of that opposition, rather speaks Mr. G——'s eulogium. Had they had any objection to him as a preacher, or as a man; had they thought lightly of his talents, or doubted his character; in short, had there been any considerable objection against him, which could, with propriety or decency, with justness or safety, have been mentioned and urged against him, the minority would have felt no delicacy in declaring it. For, indeed, there is no delicacy in a transaction of that solemn and important nature. When I am to choose a minister, a pastor, a teacher, under whose instructions I am to sit down for life—if I know of any just reason for withholding from him my suffrage, I shall certainly make it known to him, and to others; and, above all, to that judicatory who are to be influenced by it. And if I have any just conceptions of the dictates of common sense, when a Presbytery perceive that a very great majority are desirous to give a minister a call, and a small minority come forward and object to the measure, but refuse to make known the nature of their objection, that it cannot be regarded as worthy of notice by any judicatory. It must be presumed that they are ashamed of their own objection, and by that consideration alone are prevented from declaring it. And I suspect this was not far from being the case in the affair of Mr. G——.

I should not, Gentlemen, have been thus particular in this detail, but I perceive in it an organized form of opposition to that strain of doctrine which I believe to be the truth, and against those men who dare to preach that doctrine. It is perfectly well known that the objection to Mr. G—— was from no other cause; for no other reason did the minority refuse to state the nature of the objection; and, I add, for no other reason did the Presbytery refuse to pass the call to Mr. G——. Let me reverse the table, and I shall throw convic-

tion into the face of all parties, that what I say is true. Let it, for a moment, be supposed that that minority had been Hopkinsians, and objected to Mr. G——, do you not think their objections would have been "pumped and sifted" out? Do you believe, gentlemen, that that Presbytery would then have resisted the call? Nobody can believe it. Do you believe that, in that case, you would have heard the solemn protest, with such tender girdings of conscience, against the reversing act of the Synod, and the solemn appeal which is to carry the whole business up to the General Assembly? I say, had the minority been Hopkinsians, and the Presbytery, at their remonstrance, arrested the call of such an overwhelming majority of the Synod—reversed the decree of the Presbytery, do you believe you could have heard the same voices lifted in a protest, vindicated by such astonishing principles? Would you, in that case, have heard it unblushingly urged, that a minority may object, without reason, yet prevailingly, against a minister, while a majority of five to one shall be crushed in their application to a Presbytery for a call?

No, gentlemen, if this minority had been Hopkinsians, this whole train of events would have been reversed. We should not have heard a pretty face, with many kind simpers, deplore the fate of that congregation, yet, with solemn pomposity, declare, that the minority must be supported, and the majority of five to one crushed and silenced before them;—and why? Because that is the proper, just, and rational course of the thing. Let me not shrink from the truth, which is eternal and imperishable: it was because they wished to call a man deemed a Hopkinsian.

In this shape it must go before the General Assembly, the supreme Presbyterial court of this country. And in the sight of God and men, it will be neither more nor less than the trial of the grand question, whether a church and congregation shall have a right to settle a Hopkinsian minister. For, with men of thought and discernment, the shades of difference between a majority, five to one, and a unanimous call, are trifling as they relate to the urgency and just claims of that call. The rights of a bare majority to call and settle a minister, even when an

almost equal minority are resolute in their opposition, and pointed and definite in their objections, have rarely been questioned; but when the disparity stands five to one, both in numbers and property, it forms a case which comes, probably, near to a level with the ordinary condition of calls—which rarely are unanimous.

I have already stated that the nature of the objection to Mr. G——, though understood, was kept out of sight before the Presbytery. I will here say nothing, how far that rule of civil courts, which admits nothing to come before the higher court of appeal but what was agitated, both as to matter and form, in the court below, is proper to be regarded as a rule in the church of Christ, though I will not disguise my fears that our ecclesiastical judicatories are travelling with hasty and dangerous strides towards the tedious and bewildering forms, the technical language, and the artful sophistry of civil courts, and I suspect that many of our parliamentary, legal, and courtly phrases would strike the ear of a primitive Christian, or an apostle, with surprise. However that may be, the nature of the objection to Mr. G.——, not appearing in Presbytery, or Synod, will not appear in the General Assembly. Yet, as in both Presbytery and Synod it was well understood, so I trust it will be in the General Assembly; like an invisible genius, it was the moving-spring of action in the Presbytery and Synod, whether the ball thrown in was marked with A. or C.; and, of course, as every thing goes from the lower to the higher court, that must go with the rest, *in statu quo*.

But, Gentlemen, where is Mr. G—— during this tedious period of "the law's delay?" What is the condition of that parish and congregation? However trifling their division at first, are the aspects of things, which, at every change, become more and more threatening, calculated to compose their differences, and to soothe their contentions? Exposed to the rod, first of a Presbytery, then of an extensive and venerated Synod, and now, last of all, of the General Assembly, a body extended through the continent, Mr. G—— must possess uncommon fortitude if he be not depressed, and, perhaps, discouraged. He well knows

the cause why this storm, which must finally agitate the whole American church, in relation to his own case, has been set in operation against him. He knows, if justice had been done him at first, that the persons opposed to him would have been required to explain their objections, and, of course, that the Presbytery would scarcely have dared to resist his call, or if they had, it would have been done above board, and under no ambiguous or fictitious colourings.

Gentlemen, what influence will these proceedings have on the minds of young men preparing for the ministry, in all parts of this country? Are we to believe they are wholly free from all selfish feelings, from all liability to be warped by views of popularity, by prospects of speedy and advantageous settlements? Is every one of them a Luther, a Knox, an Edwards—ready to face all opposition, and brave all dangers for the cause of truth? Are they all in a situation to come to an unbiassed knowledge of the truth? These are serious considerations, and, I presume, will have their due impression on your minds.

That truth has made progress in this country is as evident as it is that God has poured out his spirit on his churches—is as evident as it is that religious freedom and toleration have here first showered their blessings on mankind. The same spirit is opposed to both, and is equally free and bold to declare the latter profane licentiousness, and the former, error and delusion, and a departure from "the form of sound words." The sun from a cloudless meridian is not more visible than that a powerful diversion is making in opposition to both, and is beginning to arm itself, not with evidence, argument, or moral suasion—not by addressing the understandings and consciences of men, but with the varied forms of personal influence, extensive interests, and ecclesiastical censures—with pecuniary funds, establishments, and institutions. And this incessant harping on the reformers, and doctrines of the Reformation, this leaning towards the established churches in Europe, which are no models for us, is but bringing round a sweep of influence, and setting up, as a mark, a kind of "unity of the faith," which is forever to exterminate all freedom of opinion and inquiry, and

eventually all liberty of conscience. And it reminds me of an anecdote I lately read in the life of Pizarro. He had been, on a certain occasion, treated with great hospitality by a tribe of Indians; and when, some time after, he was at war with that tribe, and had besieged their last fortress, his generous feelings wrought so upon him, on recollecting their former kindness, that he determined to spare the place, and forbade his soldiers plundering it. His little army was generally pleased with the proposition, especially the young Castilian warriors, who immediately resolved not to put the people to the sword, nor seize their effects. But a stern inquisitorial priest, says the writer, knit his eyebrows on Pizarro, and replied, "What! are you then willing to let these abominable idolaters escape with their effects, and not bow their necks to the yoke of the faith? No! *they shall be converted*, or they shall die!" Pizarro, fearing to exasperate this holy father, was compelled to yield the town to the sword, and to the rapacity of these advocates for *the yoke of the faith*.

And, gentlemen, may heaven long defend us from the yoke of the faith worn by the protestant churches of Europe, even the best of them. Their churches and clergy were interwoven with their government, and the state was made an instrument of their church, and the church a tool of the state. Harpur, in his "Observations," page 51, remarks, that "when the armies of Bonaparte entered the Seven United Provinces, he proceeded immediately to confiscate the property of the Belgic clergy, which amounted to the moderate sum of two hundred and fifty millions of dollars." A tolerable good living for the honest Dutchmen, by which they have made the yoke of the faith, no doubt, very strong, and as comfortable as may be.

I said they were arming themselves with the means and influence of institutions, of which the rejection of Mr. C—— as a missionary, alluded to in the preceding number, is an instance. And although the leader in that magnanimous act is not a member of the Presbyterian church, yet he is a member of one of those churches whose SPEEDY UNION with the Presbyterian church is hailed with such rapture in the famous Pastoral Letter of the Synod of Philadelphia.

My motive, gentlemen, in these particular allusions, is to show that opposition to truth is concentrated to a focus, and is directing its efforts to bar the way, as much as possible, against ministers and licentiates of this strain of doctrine; and the cases of Mr. C——, of Mr. D——, of Mr. F——, of Mr. G——, and of Mr. S——, are in point, and shed as much light upon the subject as they do darkness upon the conduct, the management, the intrigue, resorted to on those occasions.

Unless it be presumed that every youth is possessed of invincible firmness and incorruptible integrity, a state of things is fast forming which will be too great a trial for common energy, talents, and fidelity to resist; and every young man about entering the ministry will count the cost—will see at once what scheme of doctrine must render him acceptable, popular, and a candidate for the most conspicuous stations; and what scheme will expose him to frowns, opposition, and charges of heresy—will even prevent his receiving a call, though four-fifths of a congregation were disposed to give it—will expose him to the censure of Presbytery, Synod, and, perhaps, the General Assembly: nay, if he be amicably settled, will expose him to be undermined, slandered, abused, and, perhaps, ultimately ejected. Under these circumstances, which part will he take? And having been swayed by interest and popular favor, at the expense of truth, in the outset of his career, what will he be afterward? A tool for others to work with, till he finds himself in a condition to use such tools as he himself once was—a trimmer—a weathercock; any thing which the pliant qualities of a Proteus can be wrought into; any which the service of his superiors may require, and every thing which his interest and ambition may dictate.

But motives prior to all these will be effectually laid in the way of young men, looking towards the ministry. They must go to a theological seminary: and to the honor of that seminary be it spoken, they have not expelled, as yet, for holding correct sentiments; but from the appearance of things, *in progressu*, that event is soon to be expected. The principle part, nay, almost all who receive their education there, come out, thoroughly and finishedly triangular. They go forth and preach

all the points of *imputation*, contended for by any one :—a limited atonement—know nothing about moral inability, and count that important distinction, as a most promising young divine of this city lately declared before the New-York Presbytery, nothing but "*hodge podge*:"—make all religion to consist in faith—a mystical principle above all creature perfection, or conception :—disinterested benevolence a scarecrow, and a little selfishness *a very good thing* :—that people must, by no means, be willing to be damned, in order that they may be saved :—that moral virtue is quite an Old Testament, Jewish economy, Arminian affair, and out of date ; metaphysics, ugly things :—that people must love Christ, because he is about to save them, and surely they would be very ungrateful if they did not :—that the non-elect will be condemned for not believing that Christ died for them, because they do not know but that he did die for them. They never fail to impress the hearer that he is, in every sense, unable to do his duty, yet will be condemned for not doing it :—that he ought to believe in Christ, though faith is a divine principle implanted, and can be given to none but those whose debt to justice Christ has paid :—that men are moral agents to do wrong, but not to do right; and, in a word, that sinners are not in a state of probation.

Gentlemen,

If we enjoy the honour and felicity of belonging to the first nation on earth, where the sacred rights of civil and religious liberty have been fully established—if in consequence of these peculiar privileges, accompanied with the still greater blessing of the light and influence of God's spirit, progress has been made in religious knowledge, and as we approach nearer to the time of the consummation of the glory of the church militant, the Christian church has gained a happier remove from the grounds she formerly occupied, entangled with civil government and politics; and, on the confines of darkness and superstition, shall we, after this, retrace our steps, and return back into Egypt, or into the wilderness of Sin ?

Is this the strain of doctrine, and this alone, henceforth to be regarded as canonical ? The strain every man must adopt and promote, or be deemed a heretic, and a revolter from our

standard? Shall our young men who deviate from this be rejected as missionaries, prevented from receiving calls where congregations are disposed to call them, and turned away from places where they are already settled? Shall the resources of the General Assembly be called forth to found a Divinity College, to promote this plan of instruction? Shall dollar societies, cent societies, mite societies, be organized? Shall contributions, donations, and every mode of voluntary taxation be resorted to, in all parts of this extensive country, to erect edifices, institute professorships, scholarships, and all other kinds of ships, to promote this distorted, halting, debasing, scheme of error? Can the blessing of God be expected to follow this obvious retrogradation? For it is impossible not to perceive a driving backward in the strain of doctrine and discipline in many who, by their forwardness and imposing attitude, in all our judicatories, would fain not only be thought leaders, but be such in the most absolute sense of the word.

They loudly scoff at all idea or notion of any improvement in doctrine or discipline, as made in this country. Though, doubtless, if religious knowledge and doctrine ever made any progress in any country, it has been in New-England, that land which is scarcely named in connexion with religion without a sneer. And if the spirit of God has ever been poured out in religious revivals, it is there; yet, at those revivals, the finger of scorn is pointed, and the sneers of contempt are not wanting. I do not say that the seminary will support, exclusively, that scheme of doctrine and those intolerant and destructive measures. I can only judge from what I have seen and heard, and perhaps a full experiment has not been made; but I say if they do, they will prove a scourge and not a blessing to the church—will draw down the wrath, and not the smiles of heaven upon the whole denomination.

An unknown weight of responsibility lies on the founders, directors, and instructors of that Institution. It commits the interests of a rising, and hitherto prosperous church, to few hands—, I fear too few. The training of a ministry shall exert an influence not only immediate and perceptible, but remote, extended, progressive, and without end:—it has the power to purify

or corrupt the doctrinal and moral sentiments of a nation, and to all future generations. A corrupt teacher may certainly proceed from a very pure and correct institution; as also may a very correct teacher from a polluted fountain of instruction. But, generally speaking, the scholar will be like his master, and a variation from this rule is generally on the unfavourable side.

But I ask, *in thesi*, i. e. merely as a case supposable, what if the master be a *non liquet?* What if, after having preached twenty years the doctrines of general atonement, moral inability, universal offers of salvation, and man's probationary state, nobody knows it? What if, after having deeply bewailed the lax practice of the church, for years, he performs prodigies in converting young men to that practice; nay, and performs journeys to administer it, and keep its adherents in countenance, lest they should be discouraged; thus supporting the practice which he bewails, and defeating the practice in which he believes? This might be a great stretch of benevolence. But, Gentlemen, if you make the pillars of your building of the willow, the superincumbent arches must be light and buoyant, or they cannot be sustained.

Gentlemen, I perceive a current, in these times, whose drift is rapid, broad, and strong. I have stated my apprehensions freely; nor have I a doubt that they are just. As to the furious censures that many will hurl at these suggestions, I regard them as chaff; and the neglect, which others will consider as a better revenge, I shall not feel. I have as much at stake, in these concerns, as any person living, and no more:—the eternal approbation of God is to be gained or lost by us all, and the solemn hour when that great and unalterable decision is to be made, is near and approaching. Neither the reflections contained in this or the preceding numbers, or series, are the offspring of haste or passion; they have resulted from long observation, and deliberate conviction. The drift I see is from light to darkness—the movement is retrograde; and if the golden calf, which is to lead back to Egypt, is not already cast, and shown to the camp, I shall be glad.

Your talents, your long experience, your conspicuous stations, your standing in the public confidence, and your correct senti-

ments, are pledges which the church holds, that your exertions in the cause of truth will be equally distinguished and decided.

I am, Gentlemen, with great respect,
your obedt. Servant,

INVESTIGATOR.

No. V.

It is done. The extraordinary scene which has agitated the public mind for some time, is closed, and closed in a manner which ought to fill every pious mind with alarm—every independent mind with new circumspection and resolution—every generous mind with indignation. The young men's Missionary Society, in this city, by a majority of 160 to 90, have condemned Mr. C—— as holding heretical doctrine, on the sole ground of his being a Hopkinsian. Thus, a young man of most unblemished moral character, of ardent piety, and uncommon talents, is laid under the odium of public censure; is rejected by the missionary board, and overwhelmed with all the disgrace which the ultimate censure of that society can carry with it to every extremity of the Union.

But do the people of this city consider what this censure implies, and how far it extends? Are they aware that it extends to a very great proportion of professing Christians in the city? It reaches every man who does not come fully up to the horrible and loathsome restrictions of the triangle; to every man who does not believe the whole human race deserving of eternal damnation for Adam's first act; that Christ made propitiation for none but the elect; that all men were not only condemned for Adam's first act, but utterly incapacitated thereby, in a way which has no connexion with their disinclination, to obey God; or, in other words, that their inability, caused by Adam's sin, does not consist in want of will to obey God.

Citizens, is every man in this city and country to be con-

demned and disgraced as an heretic, who does not come up to these monstrous opinions? Imagination can scarcely reach to the atrocity and insolence of this whole business. The men who have condemned an innocent and worthy young man, claim to be Calvinists. They claim to be what they are not. Calvin never disgraced religion so much as to teach the doctrines they teach. I have told you, in the Preface of the First Series, what Calvin thought of original sin. It was at the same distance from their views of it, that I am; and as to a general atonement, these men have been called upon, in vain, to show that Calvin denied it. They cannot show it; and there is much reason to believe that this young man, whom they have condemned, does not differ from Calvin in his views of the atonement.

The doctrine of a general atonement has been the great doctrine of the Church in all ages, and almost all its sections. It has been denied as rarely as the divinity of Christ; and if the whole Christian Church be considered, and the whole period of its duration, it will be found that as many have denied the divinity of Christ, as the doctrine of universal propitiation for sin.

But, citizens, you are told that the Socinians of Boston, and that region, are sprung from Hopkinsianism. You are told this by men who are ready to assert any thing that will answer their present purposes. Never was a more obvious or infamous falsehood asserted. The Socinians of those parts are descended from such men as opposed and ridiculed the reformations under Whitefield; such men as drove Jonathan Edwards from Northampton; such men as have ever opposed Edwards, West, Bellamy, and Hopkins, for the last fifty years, on the same grounds, and for the same reasons, that they are opposed in this city—the Antinomian ground.

And I here repeat the observation made in the first number of the first series of this work, that the strain of doctrine predominant in this city, or, at least, in many churches of it, will present no barrier to vice or error, but will ultimately prepare the way for both.

Yet dangerous and fatal as this scheme of doctrine is, could

truth and error have been left to a fair and open conflict, I would have preferred to have descended to my grave in silence, assured that, wherever that conflict is carried on, on equal ground, victory must crown the advocates of truth. But here it has been far otherwise. While truth was hushed, and hissed, and terrified into total silence—while no man presumed to lift his voice against the torrent of opinion and prejudice, which rolled on broad and deep as the Ganges—while pulpits thundered, presses groaned, and conversation murmured with execrations and anathemas, against a strain of doctrine of which the people were kept in perfect ignorance, it was time that a record of facts was published:—"and after the manner which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers."

INVESTIGATOR.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH SERIES.

The resentment which certain individuals still maintain, and continually express, against the Triangle, and which, whether the breeze whispers or storm roars, still reverberates through the city, excites in me various sentiments, but no variation of purpose. Regarded in the light of a furious, relentless, arrogant, and haughty intolerance, I cannot but hear it with contempt; but considered, as in many instances it is, as the result of prejudices corroborated from the cradle, or of ignorance of equal age and respectability, I cannot but feel concern mingled with pity.

Had not a course of events occurred in this city, since this publication began, which have fully justified most of the assertions in the former numbers, and especially in the first; had not these events been witnessed by the public eye, attested by the public ear, and sanctioned by the official acts of public bodies, this continual and furious roar of execration might be thought less extraordinary, and perhaps more excusable.

The Triangle is accused of three capital faults: of laying false accusations, of using indecent language, and of advancing corrupt sentiments.

In relation to the first of these charges, the city of New-York may judge for herself, how much exaggeration I have been guilty of; when she has lately heard the whole body of these men fiercely implead the Hopkinsians at the public bar, and lay to their charge, not merely in the idle slang of chimney-corner debate, but before a large Missionary Society, almost every grade, species, and aggravation of error, such as Socinian, Deistical, and Atheistical heresies. And, reader, when you hear these charges thundered from the house top, and propagated by the trumpet's blast, can you be weak enough to believe that it has not long been the theme of their perpetual tattle, their gossiping, their whispers, and intrigue. You may not know it; I do.

And as I said, at first, but which doubtless was not heeded, this controversy, this furious contention has, as it did in the Missionary Society, in every instance, begun with these men. They have sought the quarrel—have waged the battle—have given the provocation—have premeditated the attack—have thrown down the gauntlet—have bared their weapons, in every instance. The

advocates of Hopkinsian sentiments, from their arrival in this city, earnestly, anxiously, laboriously, humbly, and, I may certainly add, prayerfully, studied the peace and quiet of the city, and of the church. Yet, as I said, the most industrious measures were presently taken to root them out, and the whole art and science of attack, in all its variations, was long practised upon them.

And, reader, one day you shall know, in spite of all your reluctance, that I have not exaggerated on this point.

With reference to indecent language, I shall say little. The language of sarcasm is often resorted to, and I most conscientiously believe, if ever admissible, in any case, it was on these occasions. The spirit of bigotry and intolerance affected in this free country—the figure and phiz of a *noli me tangere* gossiping about in this free and enlightened city—the contour of a man's character and conduct, who shall here set himself up as a little spiritual despot, are things too contemptible and base, too daring and audacious, to merit systematic and solemn argument. It is hardly worth while to erect a scaffold for punishing a spider, when you can crush him with your foot.

As to satire and raillery, and sometimes couched in tolerably gross phrases, I must beg these humble admirers of great men to read Dr. Witherspoon's "CHARACTERISTICS," while, at the same time, I exhort some whose consciences are so terribly wounded by the Triangle, to be careful not to strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel, in their behaviour concerning it.

Whether the Triangle advances corrupt sentiments, the eternal fountain of light and truth will judge. Much of the rage of these tender-hearted men is levelled at this article. For as to censures, sarcasm, raillery, and abuse, if they have been in the habit of attending various churches in this city, they have heard as much from the pulpit, and probably smiled, nodded assent, or slept under it, and thought it very well said.

I blame no man for opposing the sentiments of the Triangle. But, as the quaint proverb says, "there is a thing different from that thing." They have not such a flaming disinterested love of truth as to be up in arms, when mere error is advanced. The tremendous crime committed is, that some one has dared to tell men what they do. But the half—the thousandth part has not been told.

The most deplorable state of society is that in which a set of men claim, and enjoy, the prescriptive privilege of saying and doing what they please, when to trace their steps, and lay open their conduct, is judged an unpardonable crime. This is slavery of the deepest shade, and most miserable character; and in this way people, if they are let alone, will rivet their own chains; will, like the people of Rome, be the first to immolate Brutus and Cassius, who had fairly broken them.

But the free discussions which have lately agitated this city, and which bigots, spiritual Lords *would be*, and some near-sighted people have regarded as the most dreadful of all dreadfuls, have already produced the most happy effects. The veil is rent, the prescriptive sovereignty of prejudice, superstition, and mysticism, is abolished, and the reign of spiritual despotism is at an end. The Phœnix has arisen ; a society of more than five hundred men is formed, who know they have a right to think for themselves.

In the mean time, I wish the triangular men every degree of happiness and good fortune. Demeaning themselves as good and virtuous citizens, I hope they will be loved and respected as such : I only wish them suspected and despised where they attempt to throw over people's heads the thongs of intolerance, which every man has more reason to hate and fear than he would the horrid bow-string of the eastern despot. Let them rest assured that I think them worthy of liberty, but not to reign.

And, for the good men so terribly put out with the Triangle, I must beg them to be composed, and devote the exuberance of their time and talents a little more exclusively to the cultivation of their own virtues, by which means, I think, society would receive benefit. They might, in this way, render themselves very agreeable and useful companions. But among authors, and in public disputes, they will not be able to effect much. I question whether the writers of the present day will think it worth while to ask them what they may write. I fear their uneasiness arises from too high an opinion of their own importance : men may become very extravagant on this point. It is recorded of two Roman Emperors, I believe Dioclesian and Galerius, that they once, in conversation, expressed themselves in the following couplets :

DIOCL. "When I am dead and in my urn
May earth and fire together burn,
And all the world to cinders turn."

GAL. "Nay, while I live I would desire,
To set the universe on fire."

THE TRIANGLE.

FOURTH SERIES.

No. I.

The existence of various denominations of Christians, while it certainly evinces human imperfection, yet does not certainly prove the whole Church more corrupt, or more liable to declension, than she would be under a greater uniformity of sentiment, and one general communion. This remark is justified by the history of the Church, while as yet there had been few secessions from the Romish communion. Though this consideration cannot diminish the obligation of every Christian to seek for greater unity, and to desire greater uniformity, in the whole Christian world, yet it should be regarded as a motive to fervent charity, to Christian forbearance, and a spirit of toleration.

The tower of Babel began to rise, while the whole human family spake one language; and whilst the whole Christian world formed, comparatively speaking, but one church, Constantine planned and organized her government after the model of the Roman empire, and made the dignitaries of each conformable and equal to the other; and the great lords of the church were quite satisfied and highly gratified, now, in such times, that Christ's kingdom should become a kingdom of this world.

A certain class of men have sufficiently instructed mankind

to believe, that uniformity of doctrine may be advocated and desired, from far other motives than love to the truth. Indeed, when we see a man furious for union, and becoming violently intolerant, you may be as certain that he acts from sinister motives as that he acts at all. But whatever may be the motives of such men, how mistaken are they in the means by which they seek to gain their object! They cannot but incur suspicion—they cannot escape detection. Censure, hatred, and malevolence, are but different methods of bringing people over to their cause; and their policy, in any free country, will drive away ten persons, where it will conciliate one. You will hear them constantly talking what glorious times we should have, and what great things would be done, if all held to "*the form of sound word.*" Ah! glorious times indeed! If all would unite in one church, and make these men chief rulers, they might immediately commence the building "of a city, and of a tower that would reach unto heaven." Their rage for union arises from the facility it would give to their schemes of ambition.

In the divisions of the Church of Christ, however much blame may be attributed to men, there still is evident the hand of God. These divisions are to be viewed in no other light than that of their instrumental causes. The Almighty Ruler of the Church, and of the world, could have prevented them—could have caused that all his people should be of one heart, and of one mind; and it is believed that such a day as that will come. But, reader, if that day should come, it would be no day of rejoicing for these furious intolerant persecutors for uniformity: it would answer their purposes still far less than the present divided state of the Church, when they are quite in a rage because so few will follow their standard. The day of the Lord will be to many of them "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." When therefore, they pray for the day of the Lord, they know not what they pray for.

As in heaven itself, there will be no object gratifying to the proud and selfish heart, so the real prosperity of Christ's

Church will not answer one of the purposes of many who are now most petulant and clamorous for union. It will not increase their fame or influence; it will put them in no better humour than they now are; it will not cause people to flock after them; and it is a great wonder, if it do not put a period to all their plans for building up the Church, and throw them into the shade of oblivion.

The divisions and errors of Christians are suffered by Christ, as a trial of the faith, the patience, and charity of his people. And I have often imagined to myself, how beautiful and lovely the whole Church might appear, even notwithstanding she lies in different apartments, did she but live, in all her members, in the exercise of fervent charity. There certainly is a limit of charity, as there is a degree of error, beyond which it cannot extend. But that is a barrier so palpable, and the features of heresy are so full and strong, that Christians, exercising the temper and spirit of their profession, need be at no difficulty to discover them. But under the exercises of that pure and heavenly temper, the differences of Christians about the minor articles and distinctions of doctrine, would be very likely to vanish before the light of evidence. Such would be the candour, the frankness, the simplicity, and plainness, with which every man would point out what he supposed to be erroneous in his brethren, having no motive for their conviction, but a disinterested desire to promote their spiritual good; and they, none to maintain their ground, but what sprang from love to the truth, there would be a strong probability of the final adjustment of their differences of opinion; since truth is always more obvious than error, and the state and proportion of evidence is ordinarily in favour of truth. A man has no motive to be angry with a fellow creature for differing from his opinion: for his views of religion, he is accountable to God alone, before whom he is soon to answer for his faith and practice.

It is nothing but the combination of selfish views and worldly schemes with religion, that kindles up sectarian jealousy and intolerant party animosities. It is, indeed, for the most part, rank covetousness and base avarice that prompts to bigotry and intolerance. Let it become indifferent where a man paid his

money, or gave his attendance to public worship, and this dreadful fear of Hopkinsian innovations would forever be done away—this terrible moralphobia would be cured—this pretended holy jealousy of Arminian tenets would quickly grow cool. It is your cash, citizens, that is the sovereign charm; it is your combination with their views of interest that sharpens the edge of their weapons, which fly so thick and fast;—it is the majesty of crowded assemblies of followers, the gratifying consciousness of a supposed ascendant influence, that blows the furnace of their zeal into a seven-fold heat. It is not a care for your salvation, but an ambition to controul your faith:—it is not the fear of heresy, but fear for a favourite system, on which their popularity depends—a system supported by pride and ambition that prompts their intolerance.

But their attempts are vain, and their zeal shall dissolve like smoke in the air. The Genius of my country will not be crushed by the arm of spiritual despotism; she has triumphed where thunders roared and lightnings played their volleys—and a voice more loud than thunder, more piercing than the lightning's shaft, shall wither this impotent rage. The voice of truth shall yet prevail.

Having proceeded thus far on this essay, I received the following letter, in which, I think, the reader will find amusement, if not instruction.

TO THE INVESTIGATOR.

Sir,

I perceive, by your former numbers, that you sometimes dream. I must say by you, as the SPECTATOR said some of his correspondents used to say of him, that they wished he would sleep oftener. But that you may know that other folks dream sometimes as well as yourself, I make bold to send you a dream of my own, and if you think proper, you may give it a place in the Triangle, though I think you and your readers must allow it to be a quadrangular dream.

If it be true, that, "from the multitude of business the

dream cometh," you need not be much at a loss what I am, or into what company I have fallen.

I am, sir, your very
humble servant,
S. C. SOMNIFICATOR.

I fancied myself standing in the court-yard of an edifice of great size and regular proportions. This court was spacious, far exceeding in extent any thing I had ever seen, seeming to contain an extensive field. Its surface was smooth and green, and interspersed with shady trees, aromatic shrubs, and clumps of rare and beautiful flowers. Marble fountains, and jet d'eaus of pure water, variously disposed, gave freshness to the verdure; while birds of bright plumage and melodious notes disported through the shades, filling the scene with life, cheerfulness, and beauty.* This spacious court, with a gradual assent towards the building, was bordered on one side with rich and cultivated fields to an interminable extent, which in remote distance disclosed hills, valleys, and mountains; on another, it was skirted by a vast forest whose trees were tall, and whose foliage was deep and bold. In the remaining direction, it opened to a distant view of the ocean. The edifice, compared to which all the buildings I ever saw would appear inconsiderable, and which, whether palace, tower, or temple, my eye seemed unable to determine, faced the east, and as, at that juncture, it was illuminated by the cheerful beams of an ascending sun, its appearance was bright and glorious beyond conception.

A peculiar tranquillity reigned everywhere; the distant ocean seemed to slumber in peace beneath a calm and cloudless canopy, curling in silver morris to the breeze; the gentle waving of the forest showed the quiet of the elements, while over the wide country seemed the sacred smile of the sabbath. In the grand courts, and round the spacious buildings, I saw

* The American people may be said to form the outer court to the visible church. The forest represents the savage nations.—*Investigator.*

many persons whose appearance spoke the language of peace and concord ;—and they were all dressed in white.*

In a scene so entirely new, and so grand and charming, I was wholly at a loss where I could be ; whether I had fallen upon some neighbouring planet ; whether it was the celestial paradise, or whether I had been transported by some invisible power, to contemplate the beauties of the morning star, I could not tell.

Finding myself alone, and fearing I might trespass on some sacred enclosure, forbidden to the foot of a stranger, I was in suspense what course to pursue, and seemed scarcely to venture to move from my position. But on turning towards the building, I perceived that it bore no marks of royalty, as there were nothing of the equipage or pageantry of monarchs about it. It was no fortress of war, as none of the military munitions, or guards, were to be seen. It resembled not a palace of pleasure, and though it seemed the seat of cheerfulness and tranquillity, there were no indications of hilarity and mirth, nothing of the daring and dissolute, the fierce gentleness, and threatening urbanity, which marks the polished air of fashionable parties of pleasure.

As little did it bear the marks of domiciliary habitude, as was evident from its amazing size and grandeur, and from the absence of the domestic appearance of all houses, from the superbest palace to the humblest cottage.†

Emboldened by these appearances of peace and order, I walked towards the edifice, and was amazed at its stupendous height and dimensions. I passed various parties leisurely walking among the shades, enjoying the fragrance of the flowers, and the pleasantness of a region so entirely delightful. I could distinguish none of their conversation, but the air of tranquillity and reflection, bordering on devotion, which was obvious in their gesture and countenance, bespoke something sublime and awful, and I perceived must have some connexion with religion.

As I approached, I perceived the building was in three parts ; its site resembling three sides of a hollow square, open on the

* White was the ancient, as well as modern token of peace.—*I.*

† The church is a spiritual edifice, resembling no other building.—*I.*

side I was approaching. This square, made by the recess of the central building, and by the projecting of the wings on either side, formed a majestic inner court, and was divided into three compartments, separated by rows of lofty pillars, and corresponding with three grand divisions of the fabric.*

Upon a nearer inspection, I was not a little surprised to perceive the divisions of the edifice to be erected on the three grand orders of architecture. The northern wing, if that might be called a wing, which was of equal length, and greater depth than either of the other, was of the Tuscan order—the central one, of the Doric, and the southern of the Corinthian. But, methinks, never were these orders so advantageously contrasted, to jud ge of their comparative merits. The grave appearance of the Tuscan colums, their massy strength and steadiness, gave an air of safety to their towering height and superincumbent structure. Nor did they want the grace of proportion, nor the evidence of masterly execution. The solemn grandeur, awful magnificence, and eternal durability of the Gothic arch, executed in imperishable masses of granite, and with the able finish of the hand of genius, seemed careless of all comparison, while they reminded the spectator of that sublime declaration, "the strength of the hills is his."†

The southern wing, projecting to an equal extent, but with not so great a breadth of foundation, was built of costly marble, was a noble specimen of the best age of the Italian school, and far excelled the grandest work of Palladio, reaching near the perfection of Phidias.‡ From the outward extremity of these wings, and connecting them together, was an arch of incomparable beauty, boldness, and grandeur, under which it was necessary to pass to enter the inner court, and to approach the vestibule of either of the three structures; under which, also, might be seen the whole front of the central building. This edifice was of the Doric order, executed on the noblest plan, and displayed much of the simplicity and chasteness of the truly ancient school.§

* Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian.
† Congregational. ‡ Episcopalian. § Presbyterian.

The arch, extending from wing to wing, and forming the entrance to these majestic edifices, was indescribable; it seemed to rise to heaven, and looked like the triumphal monument of some being more than mortal. As I drew nearer, I was seized with an emotion of reverence and awful delight which I cannot express: and you will judge how this was increased, when, looking up with closer inspection, on the majestic arch, I saw inscribed, in letters of the purest light, "LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE."* I wept with emotions of joy and pleasure.

Overpowered with various sensations, my limbs seemed no longer obedient to my volitions, and I stood in deep suspense, looking at times into these sacred recesses, which, I was perfectly assured, could be nothing but the sanctuary of God; but in doubt whether to proceed or retire.

Whilst I remained thus passive and irresolute, two female forms, of superior address and surpassing brightness, approached me. The one I knew, as all who ever see her must intuitively know her, to be Truth. Though she appears in various degrees of splendour, yet her movement, form, and countenance, cannot be mistaken. She was dressed in robes that excel in purity the mountain snow; and the radiant diadem that never falls from her head, is always easily distinguished. Her countenance was calmly severe; the glance of her eye was penetrating, and her frown no mortal can endure. The other, who was quite a stranger, exhibited a form of grace and elegance which nothing can surpass; her light blue eye, full of vivacity and gentleness, exhibited the smile, the generous frankness, the softness and sincerity of the opening morning, her golden tresses were gathered in a wreath of flowers, which might have been mistaken for the immortal amaranthus.

"Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew,
Deep lights and shades bold mingling threw,
A lustre grand,
And seem'd to my astonished view,
A well-known land."

* The constitution under which every man chooses his religion.—*I.*

"My name," said she, "is *Toleration;* I am the companion of *Truth;* we reside in these mansions, and, if you are disposed to view them, we will be your guide." Restored to confidence, by the affability of personages so truly august, and so kind an offer, I thanked them, and accepted of their proposal. We passed under the majestic arch, and stood in what may be called the central aisle of the inner court. The edifice then presented on three sides and as it was raised on the bold elevation of forty steps, the architraves and entablatures sustained by lofty columns, appeared of majestic height, and astonishing magnificence.

The three edifices seemed equally to prompt curiosity, and invite the stranger—won by her rich and magnificent elegance—won by her bold and masterly simplicity—and won by her solemn dignity and awful grandeur. As we moved almost insensibly down the aisle, my guides seemed waiting to be determined by my preference. Toleration said to me, with a smile, "Sir, you can visit all these buildings, and we will enter, first, the one you may prefer." But, by this time, we had begun to ascend the lofty vestibule of the central edifice; and my guides concluding, that, by accident or inclination, I preferred entering there, immediately proceeded to the door.

As Truth turned to ring the bell, she informed me that we might possibly meet with some difficulty in gaining admittance; for that three persons had lately obtained a residence there, by the courtesy of the original proprietors of these grounds and buildings, who had officiously volunteered their services in guarding the entrance against the intrusion of any improper persons. Upon asking their names, she replied, with a smile, that they had arrived there, and acquired some influence under the names of Orthodoxy, Zeal, and Vigilance; but that their true names, in their native country, had been discovered to be Bigotry, Intolerance, and Persecution. Upon my expressing some surprise at this intelligence, Toleration observed, that "they were generally well known, and thoroughly despised; but having gained a residence and considerable influence, under very imposing and specious names, they had attached several restless and turbulent spirits to their interest, and being

in a region of great peace and tranquillity, where nothing is so much regretted as measures of violence and hostility, many who knew them the best, and detested them the most heartily, nevertheless, preferred bearing with their impertinence, to using the means for their expulsion." "But, perhaps," said Truth, "you may not have a glimpse at them, for in some apartments in this building, they dare not even be seen, and in many others, they do not choose often to show their faces, but on very special occasions."

A moment after, the door was opened by a young damsel, whom, by her peculiar air, and exceeding simplicity and beauty in person, dress, and manners, I should have almost known to be Charity, had not Truth kindly pronounced her name. There was nothing of ornament on her head, but the beautiful ringlets of auburn hair which flowed carelessly down with inimitable grace; and with a countenance beaming the smile of immortal youth, she bade us welcome, and desired us to enter.

Turning from this very uncommon door-keeper,* who, at any other moment than this, could not but have commanded a more interested attention, a spacious hall of great magnificence was before me. Though it seemed but a common hall of entrance, to the interior of the building, it was fitted up with peculiar devices and appropriate insignia.

This vast saloon was decorated with paintings and statues of most extraordinary design, and unparalleled execution. It seemed difficult, at first sight, to determine whether I was surrounded with living beings, or with visions of the mind. Though evidently paintings, they seemed to have been done with a boldness of colouring, and force of expression, which as much defied the pencil of Raphael to reach, as the pen of Shakspeare to describe. The grandeur of the apartment seemed shaded with the solemn gloom of twilight, while, nevertheless, the vivid colourings of the scene showed an inherent lustre, resembling, though far surpassing, a picture exquisitely illuminated. In a word, the shading was deep and awful, but interspersed and enlivened with tints which evidently surpassed all mortal

* Charity keeps very few doors, either public or private, either of churches or families.—*I.*

skill. It was no emblem, and I felt that I was contemplating a reality, whose full import I a moment after understood.

On a spacious pannel of the wall, at my right, the hangings displayed a landscape which particularly engaged my attention. A small and solitary vessel lay moored in a bay of the ocean, on the shores of a vast and boundless wilderness. The world of waters seemed agitated and raging beneath a wintry sky, while the leafless forests discovered to the eye the snow-clad hills, the rivulets chained in ice, and the lakes, now congealed like marble, holding a solid mirror to the etherial vault, and the revolving lamps of heaven. The wide circuit of the waters, which seemed a real prospect of the ocean, was cheered by no sprightly sail; no ship with swelling canvass was either coming in or going out; no joyful shouts of sailors could be imagined hastening to embrace their friends, after the perils of the voyage were past; no stately vessel courting the favourable gale to waft her to a distant port.

One solitary bark there was, in the waters which the keels of commerce had never ploughed, and where the gallant ship never floated. On the neighbouring shore, a few humble cottages denoted, by their form and texture, the vestiges, as did the ascending smoke the present residence, of civilized man. But how dreary was their prospect—how joyless their condition! At no very discriminating distance were discernible the winter camps of the hostile savage; the smoke of the wigwam was ascending from the neighbouring hills, and along the bays and inlets of the adjacent waters. Imagination might seem almost to hear the mingled howl of savage men and beasts prowling for their prey, and threatening to devour such of this defenceless people, as the severity of the climate, the fierceness of the elements, the rage of famine, or the angel of pestilence, on this lonely shore, might spare.

A wall, or rather a defence of palisades, encircled their dwellings, which seemed to promise little security. But without this, and at a very great distance, there was another enclosure of a more extraordinary nature, which, at first view, appeared like a luminous circle, but on nearer inspection, I perceived it was a wall of fire. The foundation glowed like solid bars of iron

rendered white in a furnace, and on the top sat a quivering flame which waved outward with fierce coruscations towards the wilderness. Whilst the divine promise rested upon my mind, "I will be a wall of fire round about thee." Truth, who stood by my side, said, with a smile, "Behold the origin of your nation! and the trials your forefathers endured for the love of truth, and the rights of conscience. You see the colony of Plymouth, on the first days of their landing. In the midst of their trials God was their defence."

She then pointed to a distant part of the landscape, and I clearly perceived the course of the Hudson, channeled through lofty mountains, but still winding his majestic way to the sea, through the pathless wilderness, save where the roving savage had, at times, marked out his devious peregrinations, in his favourite pursuits of war and hunting. She made me, however, observe, remote in the dim and shadowy vista, the infant settlements of Albany and Bergen, the one at the mouth, and the other towards the sources of the river; and again far south, on the shores of Virginia, the only remaning vestige of civilization to be found on the northern section of America.

I was struck with surprise, at beholding on the foreground of the piece, which wonderfully represented both map and picture, and indeed, wherever Truth directed her piercing eye, and pointed with her hand, grew into a scene of living existence, the same majestic arch, already described, as connecting the wings of the buildings, and inscribed with the same motto, "Liberty of Conscience."

Till now, I had not observed a perspective glass which Truth held in her hand, which she, at this moment, presented me, after having adjusted the barrel to the first circle marked thereon. "This," said she, "will show you the effects which a century can produce on a wilderness, where God designs to build and plant a nation." As I took the glass, I observed at the circle to which the sight was adjusted 1720. I raised it to my eye, and how changed was the scene! The forest had melted away from the shores of the ocean, and the banks of the larger rivers smiled with cultivation. From Massachusetts to Virginia, a broad line of flourishing villages, and noble plantations,

resembled a fringe of gold upon a broad mantle of green. And now the whole prospect was more illuminated, and the level rays of reflection seemed to indicate the sun just risen, "the blue waves of ocean rolled in light, and the mountains were covered with day."

No longer was the frail and solitary bark seen before Plymouth. Numerous sails were visible from far, and seemed wafted by gales of prosperity; and if Plymouth had become a noble village, denoting by her appearance, wealth, contentment, and security, at no great distance from her had arisen a rival sister, a far nobler capital, which promised one day to be the nursery of patriots and heroes, and the cradle of an independent nation. But if Plymouth was eclipsed by the importance of a rising capital near her, how much more was Bergen lost and forgotten, in another name, which was quickly to become the grandest emporium of North America.

After glancing to various parts of this great landscape, I took the glass from my eye, and having drawn it to another circle, marked 1820, I was about to renew my observation, when Truth observed, that as I had no optics for contemplating futurity, I should see nothing there but darkness. And as to the present state of the country, continued she, you will derive more benefit from industry than perspective glasses.

Passing this incomparable landscape, my attention was drawn from every other object to a portrait, which occupied the western, or upper part of the saloon. It was a full length picture, and was evidently designed as the leading figure of the room. For though this gallery was a hundred yards in length, thirty in breadth, and twenty in height, it seemed equally conspicuous, from every part, and to an eye, but little acquainted with the fine arts, it could not be mistaken for the Genius of America. But it surpassed all description. It was standing on elevated ground; a flourishing olive seemed rising on his right hand, and a princely bay tree on his left, like a towering pyramid, rose far above his head, from which the shadow fell round him as from a meridian sun, though broken and dashed with intromissions of his golden beam.

The Genius, in the form and proportions of an Apollo Belvi-

ported on two rows of doric pillars, of excellent workmanship and proportions. In an alcove, or fine recess, at the upper end of this vast apartment, were several pieces of statuary, among which I discovered the well-known forms of Davies, Finley, Burr, Witherspoon, Rodgers, and M'Whorter. On the lofty and beautiful arch of this recess was this inscription, "*Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord.*" In the centre of this group of figures, on a table made of American myrtle, lay the volume of the word of God.

We returned from the upper floor of this building to the lower ones, by a different passage from that by which we ascended, and I observed, that from each of the lower apartments there was a separate ascent to the rooms of the second floor, as there was also, from every room on the second, to those on the third floor: as also, from the rooms on the second, there were direct ascents to the fourth, or grand room, which did not lie through the rooms on the third floor. These circumstances rendered this whole fabric a most curious piece of architecture; displaying, however, no less of invention, than skill in the execution.*

In the survey we took of this extensive fabric, Toleration directed our course, opening every door, (for none were locked or barred,) and giving us free access wherever we were inclined to enter. Some of the rooms seemed at that time occupied by the persons who held regular jurisdiction there: they showed us every civility, invited us to prolong our stay, or to repeat our visits, as our inclination might lead.

After we had spent some time in walking through various apartments, in all of which a uniform neatness and order prevailed, we were arrested by a singular adventure near the door of one of the rooms of the second floor. As we were approaching the door, and about to enter this apartment, three men, coming out of the room, met us, and, placing themselves

* The grand staircase first mentioned represents the course of an appeal; the other communications are obvious.—*I.*

in our way, with a very obtrusive air, desired to know who we were, and what was our business. I was not a little surprised at tones so peremptory, and language so dictatorial, so uncommon in this house. And observing these gentlemen, I thought their countenances familiar to my recollection, yet their names did not occur.

After a moment's pause, Truth replied to their demand, with great composure; "Gentlemen, this young man is a stranger here, though not unknown to us; he is about engaging in the gospel ministry, and, we think, he would not be an improper person to send abroad as an evangelist and missionary, to carry the glad news of a Saviour to places destitute of that blessing. We have, therefore, shown him the different apartments of this building, and hope he will be acceptable to those whose business it is to commission men for that purpose, and also a blessing to the Church of Christ. But, gentlemen," continued she, "as myself and this lady have dwelt here ever since this fabric was erected, and as we have not the honour of knowing you, we are under the necessity of asking the same favour of you which you did of us."

This address of Truth was received with a haughty air, and these men looked as though they would give the reply, given on a somewhat similar occasion, when the arch fiend had entered into the garden of innocence, and was there detected by Ithuriel and Zephon, two of the angelic guards of Paradise. When they demanded his name, he replied,

"Not to know me argues yourselves unknown."

These men were dressed in black, and so exactly resembled three clergymen whom I knew, that had not one of them declared their names to be Orthodoxy, Zeal, and Vigilance, I should have supposed I knew them. It brought to mind, however, what I have often heard asserted, that men who in form and features resemble each other, are generally found to have a likeness in mind and character. A remark, in favour of which, I think philosophy can furnish some reasons, however experience may decide.

Orthodoxy was a man of middling size, of dark complexion, rather inclining to Roman or aquiline and acute features, remarkably grave, quite precise in his language, affected in his manners, and looked jealous, hypochondriacal, very solemn, and sourly religious. The superciliary and frontal muscles seemed long obedient to the agencies of spleen, pride, and arrogance; and his whole expression seemed to say, that he expected to be treated with great respect.

Zeal was a small man, rather spare, of tolerable regular features, of the light and choleric temperament of complexion, looked sharp, uttered quick, voluble, sententious, and round periods, with a voice which, had the man not been seen, might have been supposed to have proceeded from a much larger body, putting me in mind of the fable of the wolf and nightingale; and I observed that he had a remarkably little head.

Vigilance was a tall, thin figure, without colour in his face, or other expression than the faint gleaming of an uneasy smile, which pain excites, rather than pleasure. He had the brown, unanimated aspect of cloudy November twilight; and if a sheep could be turned into a wolf, he seemed to resemble the mongrel that would be the result, provided that metamorphosis could be suddenly arrested when two thirds accomplished. With a long neck, and rather small features, it appeared as if, after the outline was struck, the contour had been contracted through scarcity of material in the internal fabric. In short, the eyes of this man, which were small, far separated, and of the colour of the dark oxyd of iron, void of all brightness, expressed the dull and wandering glare of morbid wakefulness, and seemed a window through which suspicion, treachery, and cruelty, alone held commerce with the world.

These gentlemen, however, appeared with an assumption of great dignity, and with a scornful smile informed Truth that they had heard of this young man, meaning me, before, and well knew that he was "unsound in the faith," desired to be no further troubled with impertinent intrusions; with which, turning suddenly upon us, they went into the room, and shut the door with such violence that the jarring noise reverberated through the neighbouring apartments to a great distance.*

* This clash was heard from Philadelphia to New-York.—*I.*

In our walks round this building, I discovered that there were two small buildings standing just behind it, resembling it in form, but smaller in size, and built of different materials. They might have been mistaken for wings to the doric ed ifice, as they joined up to it, and between them was an opening which might have formed a court yard, but that it was overgrown with briars and thorns, and presented no pasage but a narrow foot path, through which whoever passed would be liable to be scratched and torn, if not bitten by some noxious reptile that crawled below. These edifices appeared, however, very decent, and as my curiosity prompted me to view their internal arrangements, I proposed to my g uides to take a view of them. I saw the ladies smile at each other, but did not know the meaning of it; as it was their object to instruct me more by actual experience than by mere intelligence. They accordingly approached near the door of one of them, and I was not a little surprised to see the same three figures standing before it.

As we happened to see them at a distance, I instantly halted, and begged of Toleration to spare me another interview with Orthodoxy, whom I did not very much admire. We accordingly turned about; and as I had seen these men planted at this door, I concluded that we should find the entrance to the other building free, or, at least, guarded by visages less grim and repulsive. We approached the door, and were about to open it, when, looking up, we saw inscribed in large letters over it, "*None are admitted here but such as will sign the Covenant.*"

Truth, however, gave a loud rap, and immediately the door was opened; but the reader may conjecture, if he can, my surprise when, behold, there again stood Orthodoxy, Zeal, and Vigilance, looking more stern and terrific than ever; and I seemed as though I could hear the ancient maxim, "turn or burn," distinctly pronounced. I was ready, with the poor Frenchman, to exclaim, "Monsieur Tonson again!" I also recollecteded Milton's famous passage,

"Black he stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart."

gulf, they appeared situated on a rising plain of interminable extent and elevation. The fabric appeared now of one uniform material of inconceivable brightness and beauty, and, by the strength and brilliance of its reflected rays, looked like a temple "clothed with the sun." Multitudes of cheerful people, arrayed in glorious attire, seemed passing in and out of these buildings; and the firmament of heaven above them seemed as though it might resemble, in purity and serenity, that arch of the empyreal circle, which forms the glorious canopy of the celestial Paradise.

My eye was pained with the steady contemplation of such brightness, and I was fain to remove the glass, but here the scene ended, and I awoke, and my first recollection was the following incomparable lines:—

"Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy towery head, and lift thine eyes!
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on ev'ry side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend:
See thy bright altars throng'd with prostrate kings,
And heap'd with products of Sabæan springs!
For the Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow:
See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day!
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Or evening Cynthia fill her silver horn;
But lost, dissolv'd in thy superior rays,
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze
O'erflow thy courts—the light himself shall shine
Reveal'd, and God's eternal day be thine!
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But fix'd his word, his saving power remains;
Thy realm forever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns!"

S. C. S.

No. II.

Frequent allusions have been made, in the preceding numbers, to the religious tenets of the Reformers, and it is well known how the public is imposed upon by the specious pretences of several divines, who claim the exclusive merit of preaching the doctrines of the Reformation. I had measurably satisfied myself with the animadversions already made on that subject, but an ancient and very extraordinary work having fallen into my hands, I deem it an imperious duty, and it will certainly be a very great pleasure, to lay some documents before the public, which I presume few have seen, and many will read with interest. As to the authenticity of these documents, the reader will entertain no doubt, after perusing what follows. And I shall give them verbatim, in the style and orthography in which they were published.

"*These Articles, hereafter written, were agreed upon at Marpurge, by those whose names are heere vnder written, the* 3 *of Octob. Anno.* 1529.

"For the *first*, that we on both sides beleeue and hold, that there is one only true naturall God, creator of all creatures, and that the same God is one in essence and nature, and three fold in person; viz. Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, after the same manner as was confirmed in the Council of Nice, and as is sung and read in the Nicen creed, in all the christian churches in the world.

"For the *second*, we beleeue that not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, but the Sonne of God the Father, naturall God, became man by the operation of the Holy Ghost, without the helpe of the seed of man, born of the pure Virgin Mary, bodily, compleat body and soule as another man, sinne excepted.

"For the *third*, that the same God and Maries sonne, unseparable person, Christ Jesus, was for us crucified, dead, and buried, arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitting on the right

hand of God, Lord over all creatures, to returne againe to iudge the quicke and the dead.

"For the *fourth*, we beleeue that original sinne descends unto vs from Adam, by birth and inheritance, and is such a sinne that it damneth all men: and if that Christ had not come to releive vs with his death and life, then had we perished thereby everlastlingly, and could neuer have come to the kingdom of God.

"For the *fifth*, we beleeue that we are deliuered from the said sinne and from all other sinnes, together with euerlasting death, if so bee we beleeue in the said sonne of God, Jesus Christ, who died for vs, and that through such a faith, not through works, degrees, or orders, we may be deliuered from any sinne.

"For the *sixth*, that such a faith is a gift of God, which we haue not purchased by any foregoing workes or deserts, neither can attaine thereunto by our owne powers; but the Holy Ghost giues and prouides it, as it hath pleased him, into our harts when we attend unto the gospel of Christ.

"For the *seventh*, that such a faith is our righteousnesse before God, for which the Lord esteems us just, righteous, and holy, without all works and deserts, and thereby delivers from sinne, death, and hell, takes to grace and saveth for his sonnes sake, in whom we so beleeue, and thereby are made partakers of his sonnes righteousnesse and life, and of the benefit of all his treasures; therefore al cloister liuing, and Abbey lubber life, as unprofitable to salvation, are utterly condemned."

The subsequent articles relate to the visible ordinances of the gospel, viz., of preaching, of baptism, of confession, of magistracy, of the Lord's Supper, &c., which have no peculiar interest in this place. In reference to the holy supper they say:

"And though it be so that at this time we cannot agree whether the true body and blood of Christ, bee bodily in the bread and wine, yet ought the one part to performe Christian loue to the other, so far as euery man's conscience will beare, and both sides entreate the Almighty God, with al feruency,

that he would settle vs in the right vnderstanding by the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Signed,

MARTINUS LUTHER,	STEPHANUS AGRICOLA,
PHILIP MELANCTHON,	JOHANNES OECOLAMPADIUS,
JUSTUS JONAS,	VLRICUS ZWINGLIUS,
ANDREAS OSIANDER,	MARTINUS BUCER,
JOHANNES BRENTIUS,	CASPER HEDIO."

The above declaration of doctrine was the result of a famous conference held between Luther and Melancthon on the one part, and Zwinglius and Bucer on the other, together with their principal adherents, to come, if possible, to an agreement on the great points of religion, and particularly, concerning the sacrament of the supper, in which Luther could not get fully clear of the Romish doctrine of the *real presence* in the bread.

These were the distinguished leaders in the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland, and among the best and ablest of their divines. If the reader will turn to the statement I have given of the doctrine of original sin, in the first series, he will, at first sight, perceive it not to differ from the views of these great Reformers. The ground there taken is, that "original sin descends from Adam to us by birth and inheritance," and is a part of the grand constitution of nature, that every thing, propagated in a series of generations, shall produce its own likeness.

Though the view of the leading doctrines, in the above statement, is exceedingly concise, yet no part of the Triangle is there discoverable. As to the atonement, it is well known, to all the world, that the German Reformers, almost to a man, held to the doctrine of universal propitiation. It was certainly so with Luther and Melancthon, Zwinglius and Bucer, and all the ten, whose names are signed above. But I shall detain the reader with few remarks here, since the above is but a quotation from a much more full and complete confession of faith, of the Psaltzgraue church, in the founding and forming of which, Zwinglius was the principal leader. To that I shall immediately proceed.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. III.

The work is entitled,

"A full declaration of the faith and ceremonies professed in the dominions of the most illustrious and noble Prince Frederick V., Prince Elector Palatine. Published for the benefit and satisfaction of all God's people: according to the originall, printed in the High Duch Tongue. Translated into English by John Rolte, and published in London, A. D. 1614."

The English translation is dedicated to the Right Honourable Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice of England.

"A full declaration of the faith and ceremonies of the Psaltzgraues churches.

"CHAP. I.

"*That we have not such a detestable faith as is measured to vs abrode by peace-hating people.*

"Now to begin: we protest before God, and whole Christendome, that we have not, in any sort, such a detestable faith, as peace-hating people ascribe vnto vs, whereas they say:

That we deny God's omnipotency.

That we make God the author of sinne.

That we make God to be a tyrant.

That we deny the Godhead of Christ.

That we deny the personal union of both natures in Christ.

That we say, that the divine and human nature in Christ have no actuall and working fellowship with each other.

That we deny originall sin.

That we deny the power of the death of Christ.

That we deny the necessity of beleeving in Christ, &c. &c.

"Such, and many more the like blasphemies against God, do they accuse vs of, that we both beleeve and teach."

The reader will do well to recollect, and keep in mind, that several of the heaviest of these charges are constantly urged against the Hopkinsians, and perhaps he will also find, in these pious and venerable Reformers, an apologist for the Hopkinsian doctrines, which our Triangular men, who have so loudly and so long claimed all the Reformers as their own, will not relish. If all the divines in the dominions of the illustrious Frederick Elector Palatine should turn out to be Hopkinsians, probably the Rev. and most distinguished Mr. M——s will pronounce them "unsound in the faith." This denunciation, however, would not disturb their peaceful slumbers in the grave.

The divines of the Psaltzgrave church having noticed the errors and heresies of which they were accused, proceed in this chapter with some general observations, in which they show that, in these points, they agreed fundamentally with the great Reformers, as well as the ancient churches. In the course of which they take occasion also to enumerate the errors of which Luther himself was accused, as in the following paragraph:

"Or do not the defamers know that the wretched fellow, Doctor Pistorious, now, at this present, concludes against blessed Doctor Luther? He writes, (i. e. Pistorius,) Doctor Luther was,

A Tritheist, who said there was three Gods;

A Sabellian, who said there was but one person of the Godhead;

An Arian, who denied the euerlasting Godhead of Christ;

An Eutichian, who mingled the two natures of Christ in one;

A Nestorian, who separated the two natures in Christ;

A Valentinian, who was so mad headed as to say the human nature of Christ descended from heaven;

A Marcionite, who blasphemed that Christ was not crucified, in very deed, but only in show.

"Such, and many more the like detestable heresies that wretched fellow Pistorious construeth upon blessed Doctor Luther. And, to prove the same against him, cites his own words, which make a great show to that end."

I beg the reader to remember, that a similar attempt was made in this city in which a fellow, probably quite as wretched as Doctor Pistorius, garbled the writings of Calvin and Hopkins, and published a book called the "Contrast."

The writers of this declaration, after shewing that, in those points in which they were accused of heresy, they did not differ from Luther, nor from the primitive church, proceed to the second chapter, in which their confession of faith begins. To this I now proceed.

"CHAP. II.

"*What our faith is in very truth.*

"Now if any man shall further demand, what then is our faith indeed, the which we willingly acknowledge, then is this our answere, as followeth.

"Wee beleeue there is one only true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Sonne and Holy Ghost; and that accordingly, there are three distinct persons in that one Godly Essence, the Father the Sonne and the Holy Ghost.

"Wee beleeue further, that the same one God is everlasting and almighty, and can do whatsoever he will. Also, that hee is infinite, and accordingly is present in all places at one time, and seeth, heareth and knoweth all things. Also that he is just, and punisheth no man without desert. Also that he is merciful, and hath no delight in the death of sinners, but that they would repent themselves and live.

"Wee beleeue further, that the same one true God created heaven and earth, and all that therein is, of nothing.

"Wee beleeue further, that God sustaineth and ruleth all things which he created; and that hee hath them so in his hand, that no creature can stirre or move itselfe without will; and therefore nothing can come to passe without his permission, whether it be good or evill. Also, all that God doth at present, or permitteth to come to passe, hee foreknew from everlasting, and with well be thought councell had determined, that he would even so doe it, or permit it. Also, that he did

not determine to permit any thing to come to pass, but that which he could and would turn to a good end.

" We beleeue further, that in the beginning God created all the angels and men holy and good, and especially man in his likenesse, and to blessed immortality. But they, to wit, the angels and the two first of mankinde, did shortly after their creation, fall from God their creator; and have by such their fall, brought not only upon themselves the wrath of God, but also such a pollution of their natures, that now they can no more either will or accomplish any thing that is good, which pollution fell on the lost angels at one time. But mankind inherits such defilement, together with the guiltiness both of the first and second death, *by propagation, one from another*. From whence it is, that the same corruption of mankinde is called original sinne."

Before I proceed, I must entreat the reader to notice the statement here given of the doctrine of original sin; at least, If his object be to discover the opinion of the Reformers concerning that doctrine, and if he be desirous to know how that doctrine stood, among what may be called the doctrines of the Reformation. And I here assure him, as I have already, again and again, that the notion of the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin, as our Triangulars hold it, at this day, was unknown to the Reformers, or, if not unknown, was rejected by them as repugnant to all the dictates of reason, justice, and the word of God. And the talk they make about the federal headship of Adam, as they call it, plunges them but deeper in absurdity. To make a creature guilty of the sin of another, independent of any moral desert of his own, is a case perfectly similar to charging an innocent person with guilt; while, at the same time, it is perfectly dissimilar to the case of the imputation of righteousness where it is not due. The goodness of God may certainly go beyond a sinner's merit, but divine justice cannot go beyond his desert, or charge him with crimes of which he is not guilty; nor can any possible *constitution, headship* or *federal relation*, help out the difficulty. These terms may indeed help out a man's prejudices, and cast a mist before his eyes, but they cannot aid his rational conviction.

But, reader, whether the crude and rank, the horrible and absurd notion or imputation be true or not, is not the present question—but whether that notion was taught by the Reformers; and I say it was not. They held that Adam's corrupt and depraved nature descended to his posterity, and ruined his whole race. They held, as in the declaration before us, that "*Mankinde inherits such defilement by propagation one from another.*" And hence, they were accused, precisely as the Hopkinsians are, and for the same reasons, of denying the doctrine of original sin. But I proceed.

"Wee beleeue further, though such a feareful fall, both of angels and men, could not haue come to passe without Gods permission, and that he appoints nothing without good consederation, yet is not the fault of this fall in any manner to be ascribed to him; considering that hee so created the angels and men, that they had free will to turn to good as well as to bad.

"Wee beleeue further, that it becomes not poor creatures to dispute with God, wherefore he created the angels and men so that they could fall. Also, wherefore he hindered not such a fall, whereas hee could not well haue done it. He is the Lord, and his wil is euer iust and good, though wee alwaies vnderstand it not. The Apostle Paul saith, that *God hath shut vp all vnder vnbeleefe, or vnder sinne, that hee might haue mercy on all*, that is, that no man may bee saued but meerely by the mercy of God. By this ought wee, in all reason, to let it so remaine.

"Wee beleeue further, that the fallen angels and men could not free themselues from the almighty gouernance of, but that they, on the one side, as well as on the other, are in the hand of God, and their wickednesse cannot break out, than as God hath permitted it. And this our faith is our greatest comfort on earth. For and if the wicked angels and men had the bridle in their own powers, where should we bee able to abide for them?

"Wee beleeue further, that though God permit many sinnes, in the fallen angels, and men, and that hee vseth often times their sinful actions to accomplish his holy workes (as he did the abominable deeds of Absalom, to the punishment of David, and the treason of Judas to the freedome of mankinde) also

though he often punish sinne by sinne, and blind and harden those commonly at last, who with seeing eies will yet be blinde (as formerly he did Pharaoh,) yet neuer the lesse, hee himselfe hath no pleasure in sinne, much lesse doth hee prouoke or driue any man thereto: but that the *precedent, working* cause of all sinne, which goeth before is onely and alone, the free and vnforced will of wicked angels and men.

"Wee beleeue further, that God hath adjudged the fallen angels to euerlasting fire, without any grace or mercy, to terrify us thereby; that we make not a iest of the anger of God against sinne.

"Wee beleeue further, that God hath indeed iust cause and power also, to push downe the fallen men into euerlasting hellish fire, without any grace or mercy. But hee hath not done it, *but hath offered grace again to man.* And that so he might shew the mercy without breach of his iustice, hee ordained his onely begotten Sonne to bee our surety and Mediator, and to take the punishment upon him, which wee deserued, and so deliuer vs from euerlasting well deserued death, by his innocent death.

"To accomplish the said counsell and wil of God, the heavenly Father the Sonne of God our Lord, and Redeemer Jesus Christ, became man in the last times of the world, conceiued by the Holy Ghost, borne of the virgin, and like vnto vs in all things, sinne excepted. And when he had liued as a man thirty yeeres, hee began to preach and to teach the merciful pleasure of his heavenly Father towards vs poore sinful men; and in the fourth yeere after that, he was captiued, crucified, put to death and buried, descended into hell, and rose againe from the dead the third day, and ascended into heaven, forty days after, and set himself at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from whence hee shall return to iudge the quicke and the dead.

"And, therefore, we beleeue of Christ, that he is not a bare man, but that he is the euerlasting Almighty Sonne of God, who, at the appointed time, tooke the nature of man upon him, and is now together God and man, and so shall remaine euerlastingly in one vnseperable person.

"And, being thus at present, both God and man, in one vnseperable person, therefore do wee beleeue further, that all may,

be said of him, that may be said of God—all that may be said of man; yet with this caution, that euery thing must be vnderstood of him to be true, the diuine thing, according to the diuine nature, and the humane, according to the humane nature, &c.

"According to which then we doe beleeue, that indeed and truth the Sonne of God died for vs, but yet, not according to the Godhead, but onely according to the manhood, for the Godhead cannot die.

"Of the power of the death of Christ beleeue wee, that the death of Christ, (whilst he being not a bare man, but the sonne of God died,) *is a full all-sufficient payment, not onely for our sinnes, but also for the sinnes of the whole world.* And that hee by his death hath purchased, not only forgiuennesse of sinnes, but also the new birth by the Holy Ghost, and, lastly, everlasting life.

"But wee beleeue therewithall, that no man shall be made partaker of such a benefit, but onely hee that belieueth on him. For the scripture is plaine where it saith, *he that belieueth not shall be damned.*

"We beleeue further, that the true sauing faith cannot bee without repentance and good works. For such a faith layeth hold on Christ wholly, who was made of God, not onely righteousness vnto vs, but also sanctification.

"Wee beleeue, further, that true blisse-making faith cannot be without good works, yet, neuerthelesse, the man before God's iustice seate, (that is, when hee is thoroughly touched with his sinnes,) neither can, or should beare himself vpon his good workes, it so being that they are euer vnperfect. But that a man shall appeale onely and alone vnto the grace of God, before his iudgment seate, which grace hee hath prepared for vs in Christ, and take hold on the same grace with a belieuing heart, and so shall God forgiue him his sinnes, and esteeme him iust for the full satisfaction of Jesus Christ. And that is our meaning when we say that man is iustified before God, onely by faith, without helpe of good works: namely, not that good works should be abandoned, but onely that a man should not put any confidence therein.

"Wee beleeue, further, that God hath ordained the preaching of his gospel to this end, that he would worke in us faith in Christ thereby, and that the same preaching of God the Lord is no iest, but that it is his earnest will and intent, that all people that hear such preaching should beleeue the same, and should return to Christ."

And here I must beg the reader to notice, that if the atonement of Christ, and his propitiation for sin, regards only the elect, then surely the preaching of the gospel to the non-elect is, indeed, no jest, because it is a thousand times worse. It is the greatest possible imposition, in the most serious of all concerns, to offer salvation to a sinner for whom there is no salvation; to invite him to come to Christ, who never died for him; to condemn him for unbelief, when, should he believe, he would believe a falsehood. Thus it was viewed by the Reformers.

"Wee beleeue, further, that mankind is so corrupted by the fall of our first parents, that they cannot vnderstand, or entertaine, the preaching of Christ, vnlesse God open their understandings by his holy spirit, and tvrn their hearts to Christ.

"And that, therefore, the gospel is a spiritual worke of God, which God bestoweth not upon all men, but also that the understanding and the receiving of the gospel (or to speake with one word) faith, is an especial worke of God."

With great pleasure could I go through the copying this noble and beautiful declaration of the faith of these able and excellent reformers. But as the remaining points of it relate to the ordinances of the gospel, and do not involve the doctrines which are specially called in question in these Numbers, I thought it needless to give the whole, but shall close with their last article.

"And we beleeue lastly, that, for the most part, God holdeth his church under the crosse, and will first make it fully perfect, and glorious hereafter in the world to come; according to the patterne of his sonne, who entered into glory by affliction and suffering."

Reader, you hear, in the above confession of faith, the voice, not of an individual, but of a body of the ablest and best divines the German Reformation produced, at the head of which was

the celebrated Zwinglius. — I have only to request you to notice their views of original sin, of the atonement, of faith, and of justification. This I do, because they differ on those points, in no material idea from the doctrine called Hopkinsian; and you will perceive how little that doctrine is deserving of the epithet of NEW DIVINITY. But I proceed to the third chapter.

CHAP. III.

" *That wee haue not founded and learnt such our faith from blinde reason, much less from the revelation of Satan, (as some calumniate us,) nor from the weak writings of men, but solely and alone out of the infallible word of God, through the gratious enlightening of his holy spirit.*

"Wee reade indeede, also, the writings of men, especially those whom God hath stirred up in these last daies, against the idolatrous Popedome, such as were Luther, Melancthon, Zwinglius, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Brentius, Calvin, Beza, &c. And confesse, to the glory of God, that we have received information from them, and do daily receive, the better how to vnderstand aright the holy scriptures, and to use them to our profit.

"But we do not found ourselves in matters of faith upon the same, or any man's else, but we found ourselves in matters of faith onely and alone upon the word of God, and believe men no further than they can shew what they say out of the word of God. And that therefore, for that we know that all men may faile, though they may be as highly enlightened and as holy as may possibly be, and that God is onely hee that cannot erre. And therefore we put no confidence in man when he speaketh of himselfe."

In the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters, they speak of their difference with Luther relative to the doctrine of the real presence, in the bread of the sacrament, in which various arguments and illustrations are used. In the 5th chapter, however, they give the opinions of the fathers, which I shall quote for the entertainment of the Reader.—They proceed:

"Tertullian, who lived about the yeere of Christ 200, saith,

The Lord took bread and divided it amongst his disciples, and made the same his body, in that he said, This is my body, that is, a representation of my body.

"Cyprian, who lived about the yeere of Christ 240, saith, That the bread and the wine are the body and the blood of Christ, as, the betokening and the betokened thing, used to be termed with one name.

"Gregory Nazianzen, who lived about the yeere of Christ 360, nameth the bread a sign answerable to the body of Christ.

"Chrisostome, who lived about the yeere after the birth of Christ, 370, saith, The Lord hath commanded a representation of his body in the supper.

"Theodoret, who lived about the yeere after the birth of Christ 440, saith, our Saviour himself hath changed the name of the tokens of his body, and of his body to the tokens, &c. and in sundry places he nameth the bread and wine, in the supper, a representation, and opponent signe of the body and blood of Christ.

"Augustine, who lived about the yeere after the birth of Christ 390, saith, The Lord hath commanded a representation of his body, in the supper.

"Beda, who lived about the yeere after the birth of Christ 730, saith, Christ hath instituted instead of the flesh and blood of the Lambe, the sacrament of his flesh and blood, in the representation of bread and wine.

"Bertram, who lived about the yeere after the birth of Christ 800, when some began to beleeve the bodily presence of Christ in the supper, and being demanded thereabouts by Charles the Great, freely declared that the bread is figuratively and not really the body of Christ."

The Reader will, I trust, duly appreciate the importance of the third chapter of this work, wherein those real Reformers, who showed themselves worthy of that exalted title, disclaim all reliance on the opinions of men, and all that blind and stupid veneration for names, which has wrought infinite mischief in the church of Christ, and to which incessant reference has lately been made, with a view to mislead the minds of the ignorant and the credulous.

A poisonous stream of antinomianism has been poured into the church, audaciously pretended to be the doctrine of the Reformation. It is time the public were undeceived.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. III.

The Hopkinsians are accused of the monstrous, blasphemous error, that God is the author of sin. This point has already been considered, but as the 7th chapter of the Declaration of the Faith and Ceremonies of the Psaltzgrave Churches, advances the same course of reasoning on that subject that has been advanced by many writers of New-England, I trust it will not be displeasing to the reader to know what has been the opinion of Christian churches, in other ages and nations, concerning that matter. He will at least perceive that these reasonings and opinions did not originate in New-England, and if the Hopkinsians are, after all, incorrect, they still do not deviate from "THE DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION," or the sentiments of the Reformers. And in this chapter they will hear the voice of that prince of Reformmers, the immortal Luther, as well as others who were ornaments of their age.

CHAP. VII.

"*That wee doe not beleeue and teach otherwise of the foreknowledge and almighty providence of God, ouer all creatures, and of the fountaine from whence sinne springeth, than as Doctor Luther, of happie memory, hath beleeued and taught thereof.*

"The second point, which was brought into controuersie after the death of Luther, is of the foreknowledge, that is, of the almighty gouernment of God over all creatures, good and bad. Of the same wee haue heretofore diuers times so declared our mindes, that the contentious are forced to confesse themselues, that there is nothing rebukeable in the same. Onely say they,

that wee haue aforetime spoken and written of that matter, otherwise than now wee doe speake and write thereof.

" Admit now, that it were so indeede, ought wee therefore to be railed upon, for that wee make amendement? But for all that they giue wrong information there. For (God be blessed and praised) the doctrine of the foreknowledge, or almighty gouernment of God ouer all creatures, hath been alwaies so true in our churches, and so cleare, that wee neuer haue had any neede to amend the same. The reader may looke ouer all the catechismas and confessions of our churches, which hee can euer come by; and hee shall finde no other doctrine therein of the foreknowledge of God, than the same which wee doe at present maintaine, in our sermons and writings.

" But what they accuse vs to haue formerly taught, so offensively of the foreknowledge of God, and now to bee silent in, in summe is thus much, *That God hath not only seene from euerlasting, all that cometh to passe, whether it bee good or bad, that it would come to passe, but also decreed that it should come to passe, for cause of a good ende to which he would use the same.* Or, which is all one, *that nothing is accomplished without the euerlasting councell and will of God, whether it be good or bad, and that the same euerlasting councell and will of God is vnchangeable. And that according to the same al must so come to passe, as it cometh to passe.* Also, *that the permission of God when he permitteth that which is euill, is not a bare permission, but that God hath alwaies his hande in the work, and hee turneth and ordereth euery action, to what hee hath ordained it, in his euerlasting councell.*

" Out of all which they say, this must necessarily follow, that God is the author of sinne, and hath a pleasure and delight in sinne. This the complaint which they make against vs.

" Now it is without no, that such sayings are found in mens writings as are aboue rehearsed. But, neuertheless, the same are also found in the writings of Doctor Luther. As, saith he, " there comes nothing to passe without the will of God." Tom. 6. Wit. fol. 520. A. Also, " all comes to passe onely according to the euerlasting will of God, and it must so befall vnto vs, as he will." Fol. 590. B. Also, " all, in all creatures must be accomplished, after the diuine will." Fol. 527. A. Also, " let

the Diatribe plot, thinke, imagine, sing, say what they will, yet hath God decreed from euerlasting, that Judas must bee a traitor, then must be committed treason, and it is not in Judas, or in the power of any creature, to have it any otherwise, or to change his will." Fol. 524. A. "Also, out of which it followes, that it cannot be denied, that all which wee doe, and all that befalleth, whether we thinke it well or no, as befalling by chance, and is changeable, yet it must so come to passe, and cannot be otherwise, if thou lookest to the will of God. For God's will is powerful, and will not be hindered. For hee is nothing else than the Godly force and power itselfe. And also God is the most wise, so that no man can decieue him. When now his will will not suffer itselfe to be hindered, that it should not be accomplished in time, place, manner, measure, as God hath decreed and will have it." Fol. 470. A. Also, "This do we also say, that when God worketh all, in all things, he also worketh in the ungodly, it so being that he created all things alone, and ruleth alone, and moueth and driueth them according to his almighty powerful working, which no creature can shunne or change, but it must follow, euery thing according to his own kinde, given it of God." Fol. 548. Also, "All people upon the earth find these two principles printed and written in their hearts, that they must acknowledge in their hearts, and say yea therevnto, when they heare them mentioned. For the *first*, That God is almighty not onely in respect of force, but also in respect to powerful operation. For the *second*, that he knoweth all things, and hath decreed from euerlasting, and can neither erre nor faile. When yea is said in the hearts of all men with respect to these two principles, then it followe by and by, most powerfully, and certainly, that man can gainsay that we were not, neither are made by our own willes; but it must so come to passe according to the will of God. And it also followes, that we do nothing that we will, according to free will, but *what*, *when* and *how* God hath decreed it from euerlasting, and worketh according to his councell and euerlasting power, which can neither faile nor change." P. 528.

So far, reader, you hear the reasoning of Luther, on this point. "Such and many more the like sayings are written here and

there in the writings of Doctor Luther, which doe affirme as much as we doe, *That all must so come to passe, as God hath decreed, ordained, and determined from euerlasting, and that his almighty working concurreth in all things.* Therefore, either we doe not make God, by this our speech, the author of sinne; or Doctor Luther must have also made him to bee the author of sinne.

"It may bee both are true, might some man say, that namely, Doctor Luther, as well as you, did erre in this point. Answer: They may faile that will, yet cannot God faile, who hath spoken so euen in his holy word, of this matter, as both wee and Doctor Luther speake thereof, that, namely, there commeth nothing to passe without the councell and will of God whether it be good or bad."

Having proceeded thus far, in the language of Luther, they then proceed to give their own illustrations on the point in question. As follows:

"For example, was not that a wicked act, that Judas betrayed Christ?—yet for all that Christ saith, that it was so determined by God. *Behold*, saith *he, the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me at the table*, and truly the son of man goeth as it is appointed. *Luk.* 22. 21.; and to the like effect, *as it is written of him. Math.* 26. 24. (Note. As it is appointed, and as it is written of him, is taken in the holy scriptures, for all one. By which it is manifest, that all that stands written in the scriptures, that should come to passe, in time to come, was so appointed by God, that it should come to passe, and that these sayings, *the scripture must be fulfilled*, and *the councell of God must stand*, are all one.)

"And Peter saith, whilst it was so appointed or so written, it must, therefore, he accomplished, The scripture must have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spoke before of Judas. Yea, not onely the treason of Judas, but also of all the wicked deeds and murtherous acts, which Herod and Pilate, with the heathen and people of Israel committed against the sonne of God, saith the scripture, *they did whatsoever the hand and councell of God determined, before, to be done. Acts* 4. 28. Yea, the scripture ascribeth this whole

worke throughout to God the Lord himselfe, and saith, *The Lord would breake him, and make him subject to infirmities.* So was the work principally the work of God, but Judas, Herod, and Pilate, with the heathen and people of Israel, were but instruments and tooles which God used to accomplish such a worke.

"Another example. Whereas the brethren of Joseph sold their innocent brother Joseph to perpetuall slavery into Egypt, was not that a great sinne? Yet Joseph saith, *You sent me not hither, but God. Gen.* 45. 8. Did God then doe it? Then did he determine before, and conclude that hee would doe it, for hee effects nothing inconsiderately, but he worketh all things after the councell of his owne will.

"Another example. Whereas Sampson tooke a heathen woman to his wife, against the expresse word of God, and against the faithful disswasion of his parents; was not that a great sinne? And yet the scripture saith, *it came of the Lord. Judg.* 14. 4.

"Another example. That Shimei cursed the Lords anointed, was not that a great sinne? And yet for all that Dauid saith, *The Lord hath bidden him.*

"Another example. Whereas Satan prouoked Dauid to number the people, and Dauid did it; that was a great sin, as well of Satan as of Dauid. Neuertheless the scripture saith, not barely and alone, that God did permit it, but it saith also, that God did it himselfe, as appeareth by the plaine text. *And the wrath of the Lord was againe* [*kindled against Israel, and he moued David against*] *them, in that he said, go number Israel and Judah.* 2 *Sam.* 24. 1.

"Another example. Was not that a fearfull great sinner? that the unnaturall sonne, Absalon, hoisted his aged and decaying father from his kingly state, lying with his fathers ten concubines in the sight of all Israel? Yet, saith God to Dauid, not onely I will permit it, but I will doe it. I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them vnto they neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sonne: for thou diddest it secretly, but I will doe this thing before all Israel. 2. Sam. xii. 11.

"These, and the like examples, whereof there are great store in the Bible, doe manifestly witnesse that the permission of God, when hee permitteth that which is evill, is not a bare and naked permission, but that he, also, hath a hand in the worke and he gouernes and turns it after his owne pleasure. Otherwise hee could not say, 'I will do it, or, I haue done it.'

"But, yet, they are hard sayings, might some one say, and they seeme, in truth, to import as much as if God was thereby made the causer of sinne, and had a delight in sinne. For how is it possible that hee should not be the causer of sinne and have a delight and pleasure in sinne, when he hath not onely determined the same that it should be accomplished, but, also, hath himselfe a hande in the worke, and moueth mankinde therevnto?

"Answer. Blind, mad and peremptory reason thinks so indeed. But whosoeuer submitteth himselfe to the word of God with an humble heart, he shall well know and learn to vnderstand that God is no causer of sinne, or hath delight and pleasure in sinne, though indeed he haue ordained that this or that sinful worke of his creature should come to passe, and the worke must be done, yea, hee ascribeth it to himself. The which the better to vnderstand, by the God-fearing reader, wee will impart this information in short, according to our powers, for his assistance.

"The Almighty God, as he once created all things, euen so gouerneth hee all things continually by his prouidence. Therefore the prouidence of God is nothing else than the Almighty gouernment of God ouer all creatures, both good and bad, and containeth two parts in it.

"1. That he maintaineth the being and power of all creatures, so far, and in what manner it pleaseth him; without which maintenance no creature can be sustained a minute of one hour, or is able to rule or moue himselfe, in the least measure, as Paul saith, *hee giveth to all life and breath and all things.* Also, *In hime we liue, and moue, and haue our being.*

"2. That he hath the motions of all creatures in his hands, and turneth them which way he will, according to the work, which hee will accomplish by them; as Dauid saith, *they con-*

tinue all by thine ordinances. Ps. cxix. 91., and the examples manifest that, sometimes fire, sometimes water, sometimes good, sometimes bad angels, sometimes godly, sometimes wicked men, sometimes frogs, sometimes lice, &c., must serue to accomplish his councells. And there is nothing exempt from such a disposing God. Euen, also, that which seemeth to be already performed, as it is written, *The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposition thereof is of the Lord;* not yet the very harts and thoughts of men, as it is written, *From the habitation of his dwelling hee beholdeth all them that dwell on the earth; he fashioneth their hearts euery one.*

"It is true, God hath, indeed, the angels and men with that kind and nature that they can move themselves by their own free will, and either intend this or that. Euen, indeed, as they doe. But for all that, he holdeth the raines of their free will in his hande, in such a manner that either hee can let them proceed when it goeth after his will, or hee can pull it backe, or moue it to this, or the other side, euen as sometimes a man draweth on a beast to a snare, which he letteth either passe freely before him, or pulleth backe, or can turne hither or thither, which comparison God himselfe vseth, where he saith to the king of Assiria, 'I will put my hooke in thy nostrils, and my bridle in thy lips, and will bringe thee backe againe, the same way thou comest.' Esa. xxxvii. 29.

"From whence it may well be said that the permission of God is not a bare permission, but that God hath alwais a hand with them in the action. For in all permissions of God concurre these two parts of the foreknowledge together. *First*, that he sustaineth the being and power of the creature, even in the committing of sinne, as is well known. *Second*, that he hath, also, their wicked and sinful motions in his hands, and so turneth them that the same must be affected thereby, which hee will have effected to the furtherance of his glory, and the benefit of his servants. Therefore, hee also ascribeth the worke which is effected in this manner, oftentimes to himselfe, as the abovenamed examples doe witnesse.

"The same is one part of the special vnspeakeable wisdome of God, that hee can so manage his government, that he, also,

with those creatures, which yet doe what they doe, out of free will, and in respect of their natures could do otherwise, yet, for all that, can unfallibly accomplish the same, which hee hath determined to have accomplished by them.

"Doctor Luther saith thus of this matter: If not wee ourselves, but God worketh in vs our salvation, then cannot wee act any thing bodily, before such time as his, is there; doe wee, frame wee, and worke wee it, the best wee can. And I say wee must doe wickedly, not that we are enforced thereunto; but as we vse to say, it must be so of necessity, without resistance, and yet not by any powerful compulsion or force. That is, when a man hath not the spirit of God, then is hee not, as it were, driven headlong by force, that he must commit wickednesse against his will, (as they vse to carry a theefe or murtherer to the gallows against his will,) but he doth it willingly and gladly, &c.; that is here, by vs, called a MUST, OR A MUST BE OF NECESSITY, which is not subject to alteration. Wit. Germ. fol. 479. Also, we know well that Judas betrayed Christ willingly; but we say that such a will in Judas was certainly and unchangeably to be accomplished, at the time and houre as God has determined it. Or, if wee bee not yet vnderstood, then wee must make a difference of two necessities—one necessity where a thing must come to passe at a certaine time without constraint. He that now heares vs speake, let him know that we spake of the *last*, and not of the *first*. That is, we do not speake of this, whether Judas was willingly a traitor or against his will; but whether it *must* come to pass at the time and hour which God had determined vnchangeably, that he should betray Christ willingly. Fol. 529. A.

"This is the construstion of vs and Doctor Luther, how these things are to be understood; that nothing cometh to passe unlesse God hath ordained that it should come to passe, whether it bee good or euil, and that it must come to passe, euen as the Lord hath determined it. And that the permission of God is not a bare and empty permission, but that alwaies there is mingled something of his working."

They proceed to answer objections, and to some further illustrations, but a sufficiency has been taken to show the reader,

that their reasonings on this subject are precisely the same as those of the writers of New-England, who are so continually accused of holding that God is the author of sin. I shall therefore close this number with a few remarks.

1. From the opinions of these German divines, so largely quoted, it appears that they believed there was a certain divine efficiency in all the accountable actions of creatures, both good and bad, which, however, no way impaired or altered their accountability: or, in their own words, "that the permission of God is not a bare and empty permission, but that alwaies there is mingled something of his workeing." Less than this cannot be inferred from the nature and perfections of an almighty infinitely wise God, who created, and every moment sustains, all creatures, and all their actions.

2. They clearly perceived two kinds of necessity operating on the actions of creatures. *First, force*, or what may be termed physical necessity. This always destroys accountableness, or is incompatible with it. Thus the plants move by physical necessity; and thus a criminal, who is carried forcibly to execution, motives under a physical necessity. *Secondly*, moral necessity, which is so far from being inconsistent with accountableness, that it is essential to it. As in the above quotation: "Then," says Luther, "*we must make a difference of two necessities: one necessity, where I am forced to worke by force—the other necessity, where a thing must come to passe at a certaine time.*"

Moral necessity arises from the infallible certainty that all beings possessed of reason will act according to their choice, or, as says Jonathan Edwards, "according to the greatest apparent good, at the time." Hence the moral order of events is as established and unalterable as the natural or physical; and moral necessity is as essential to freedom and accountableness, as physical is incompatible with it; and if this kind of moral necessity did not exist, there could be no such thing as foreknowledge or preordination, any more than the frame and motions of the natural universe could subsist without the operation of physical necessity.

It is easy to perceive that no event can be the proper object

of prescience or preordination which is not either immediately and infallibly connected with the energy of the divine will, or else mediately and more remotely, though not less infallibly, connected therewith, by its forming a link in the chain of events infallibly connected together, as cause and effect, and which chain must somewhere be connected with the almighty energy of God's will. Or, in other words, it cannot be certainly foreknown that any event will take place, but by its infallible connexion with a cause which can and will produce it. "Thus," says the above quotation, "when a man hath not the spirit of God, then is hee not driuen, as it were headlong, by force, that he must commit wickednesse against his will, but he doth it willingly and gladly; and that is here by us called a *must*, or *must be of necessity* which is not subject to alteration." But this is a moral necessity as above explained.

3. These writers had clearly in view the distinction termed moral inability, though they did not call it by that name. Thus, again, as in the above quotation, they say, "when a man hath not the spirit of God, then is he not driven by force, that he should commit wickedness against his will; but he doth it willingly and gladly;—and, in respect to his own powers, could do otherwise, *i. e.* could be holy, and obey God, yet for all that he *must* sin: and although Judas, in respect to his physical powers, might have done otherwise, yet, nevertheless, he *must* betray Christ. A moral inability to do right, and a moral necessity of doing wrong, always lie by the side of each other, are of equal force, though that force be not physical, and do in no case impair a man's guilt; for they are alike the evidence of freedom and the measure of guilt. If Judas betrayed Christ freely and willingly, then, with respect to his own physical powers, he might have done otherwise; but, in reference to his moral character, he could not do otherwise. When a traveller comes to two roads, he certainly is fully at liberty, and has physical powers to take either; but when he has made his election, and taken one, then it will appear that he was morally unable to take the other, and, of course, that what he did was under a moral necessity; which, as I said, consists in the infallible certainty that a man will always act according to the greatest ap-

parent good, all things considered, at the time. Whoever, therefore says, understandingly, that a man cannot act contrary to his will, or cannot change his will, means, if I may so say, a moral and not a physical cannot; as Luther in the above quotation, when he says a sinner *must* sin, means not a physical, but a moral *must*, or necessity.

I shall conclude this number, by observing, that as a moral inability to do an act is as effectual a bar as a physical, so the influence or force of moral is as great and certain as that of a physical necessity. And I will illustrate this by citing a scripture fact. "*And Elisha said unto him,* (Hazael,) *go say unto him,* (Benhadad,) *thou mayest certainly recover, howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die.*" The message sent to Benhadad was, "Thou mayest certainly recover," yet Elisha told Hazael that God had assured him that Benhadad should die. The murderers of Benhadad acted freely, *i. e.* under no physical force or compulsion; they might have let him alone; he might have recovered, yet God's certain and eternal purpose issued, and was previously declared, on the inevitable operation of a merely moral necessity. They *must* kill him.

The observation has elsewhere been made, and it ought to satisfy every humble and every rational mind, that God, who can create, constitute, and uphold a moral agent, can unalterably decree all his actions, and can have an efficient agency in the same, and yet not impair their freedom or accountableness. Those who raise an outcry at this doctrine, which is absolutely necessary to the perfections of God, seem to think nothing of the power and skill necessary to create and sustain a moral agent.

INVESTIGATOR.

PREFACE TO NUMBER IV.

The triangular men are endeavouring to make common cause with presbyterianism, to engraft their scheme of doctrine on that Church, to avail themselves of her reputation, power, and sanctions, and to stigmatise all opposition to their tenets as neither more nor less than opposition to the church. This ground is now rather preferred to the old and idle outcry of *Arminianism!* Several bold and successful sorties have been made, even some judicatories have been unfortunately influenced by rash and furious spirits.

They have already got up their phrases and watchwords. The tessira has been sent round. "*Such a man is a good Presbyterian,*" is a phrase well understood to convey all the properties and qualities of a spiritual triangle. But this expression imports something far beyond the limits of abstract doctrine, as the following number will show.

These gentlemen are mistaken. The Presbyterian church in America is never to become a triangular pyramid. It is not to be doubted that a clear majority in that body, and, I trust, a large majority are on the side of correct sentiments. The efforts which certain persons are making to curtail and suppress the right of private judgment, and bear down the truth, can neither endure the light of fair examination, nor the just abhorrence of a nation, which knows the price of her privileges. "They shall," I trust, "proceed no further, and their folly shall be manifest to all men."

The Hopkinsians are condemned as odious heretics, and as preaching doctrines which flatter the pride, and corroborate the corruptions of the human heart. The object of the following number is to show that preachers may soothe the pride, flatter the vanity, and cherish the corruptions of their hearers, and yet never preach Hopkinsian doctrines. That this is done by many who lay such imposing and obtrusive claims to orthodoxy—that it is essential and radical to their scheme of doctrine, as well as to their manner of preaching, I have the fullest assurance: and if the reader do not, in the following remarks, recognise traits with which he is familiar, I will allow him to doubt of their correctness.

These men, for it is precisely the same class, are endeavouring to bring our judicatories into the tedious, perplexing, and endless formalities of civil courts, to adopt their technical phrases, their doctrines of precedents, their rules of evidence, their doctrines of appeals, and their whole *modus operandi*, by which it must often happen, perhaps through some trifling informality, that proceedings are varied or arrested, justice is delayed, its rights perverted, or entirely contravened. And if the ministers of Christ are not liable to forget themselves in this immense and accumulating mass of judicial formalities and legal subtleties, rendered oppressive and importunate by conflicting interests, supported by opposition of talents and parties; if they do not lose the gentleness and benevolence, the meekness and sincerity, the integrity and firmness, which belong to their character—and if, when long surrounded by the appearance, they do not, at length, adopt the manners, the arts, intrigues, and corruptions of civil courts, with more latitude of perversion, because checked by laws less particular—with more pride and arrogance, because protected by an external badge of humility, and with less regard to truth, because in a wider field of construction—then perhaps there is no danger; and neither argument, expostulation, or sarcasm, are necessary.

No. IV.

A GOOD PRESBYTERIAN.

This is surely a most desirable article. For every thing to be good according to its kind, would be "a consummation devoutly to be wished," both in the natural and moral world. For every handicraftsman to be a good mechanic—every one who commands a vessel to be a good navigator—every agriculturist a good farmer—every clerk a good accountant—every member of the national counsels a good statesman—every clergyman a good preacher, and every professor of religion a good christian, would have a happy influence on the welfare of society.

But I often hear the phrase, *a good presbyterian*, used with an air of significance, with certain intonations of voice, and expressions of countenance, which seem to indicate something bordering on an occult meaning. To come plainly to the point, this is a phrase almost exclusively belonging to the triangular scheme. I have seldom heard it used but by gentlemen of that order, or as an echo from them, or in some allusion or reference to that source. It surely cannot be but that there must be many good presbyterians out of the triangle; if by *good* is intended the common import of that term, that is, they are presbyterians in sentiment, and good men; but whether they are *good presbyterians*, with a nod of the head, with a little flexure of the cervical muscles to the left shoulder, an approximation of the eyebrows, and a curl of sentiment, half mystery, and half threat, descending to the upper lip, the reader may be better able to determine in the sequel of this number. Among the rhetorical characteristics of this phrase, perhaps, I ought to have said it is usually pronounced with an emphasis on the word *presbyterian*, and a strong accent on the antipenultimate syllable *te*.

Since the words virtue, and disinterestedness, and holiness, and charity, and morality, fare so badly among them, I am heartily glad to have them so thoroughly adopt one *good* term,

and I am not unwilling to allow them the merit of being good presbyterians, as far as I have evidence to believe they are good men.

I have been at some pains to discover the true technical import of this phrase; and to discover all its meaning is not the work of a moment. Dictionaries or encyclopædias are of no use; for the terms are used to convey an import entirely remote from their lexicographic definition. It reminds me of some astronomical discoveries which have been made by a long course of observation, in which patience, vigilance, and perseverance alone, could arrive at the desired end. The process necessary to the discovery is something like a physician carefully watching the diagnostics of a lingering disease, in order that he may thereby arrive at its remote and approximate causes, and the indications of cure. With what success I have pursued this subject, the reader will certainly judge for himself, but I suspect I have nearly completed the work, and I shall immediately lay before the world the result of my observations.

One thing, however, must be premised: This phrase relates entirely to clergymen. As for a layman, all that is wanted of him is to be *a good ministerial man;* which is a different affair from being a good presbyterian; though in its place not much less important. The term *good*, even in this minor phrase, has no relation to moral goodness, of course, since no such thing is known in all the triangular regions. But if I am able to succeed to my mind in the present article, I may perhaps give the reader a small number on the qualifications of *the good ministerial layman.*

A good presbyterian, then, is a clergyman possessed of the following qualifications:

1. He is thoroughly opposed to metaphysics; I mean metaphysics according to the triangular scheme. Let no reader start at this assertion, and conclude it to be extravagant—not even the good presbyterians themselves—for I think I can bring its truth home to every man's conscience who is capable of reflection, and possesses a good memory. They have the best reasons in the world for this aversion. Metaphysical subjects are

nothing but dry, curious argumentations, and if sometimes true, always useless.

And why should they trouble their hearers with nice and tedious arguments? People are never the better for being logicians; they do not want to reason—they only want to *believe*. In allusion to this, therefore, they seldom ever speak of christians under any other appellation than "*believers*." And surely it is a term used in the Bible. They have a far better and more instructive method of filling up their sermons than by arguments. They prove their points by scripture; and I have often heard several whole pages of scripture brought to prove that the soul of man is immortal—that his body must die—that there is a future state, &c.

It is of no consequence if every person in the assembly as firmly believes the point as the preacher. He feels better satisfied to make his work strong as he goes on. He must prove it—and he does prove it—and that is not metaphysics. If he takes this text, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble," he will, perhaps, 1st. Show what is implied in being born of a woman; 2d. What is implied in being of few days; and 3d. What is implied in being full of trouble. All those points he will prove by an abundance of scripture, without any mixture of metaphysics; and that surely is preaching out of the Bible, is it not?

I can safely declare, that I never in my life heard one of your real "good presbyterians" trouble or puzzle his audience with an elaborate metaphysical argument; unless the proving of a long string of commonplace topics, by a still longer string of texts of scripture, can be called such. And I leave it for the reader to judge, whether the good presbyterian's sermon, so managed, does not produce the best effect possible; for the more points he proves by scripture, the more will his audience think him mighty in the scriptures: and they cannot but say "this man has prodigious knowledge in the scriptures."

Who ever read Euclid's demonstrations without a continual effort of mind? And for a preacher to come forward with arguments, no matter how clear his demonstrations, that will require a perpetual intensity of attention from his audience, is it

not cruel to exact from them such painful attentions? Especially, the refined and delicate minds of ladies do not want to be tortured with Euclid from the desk, when they never studied him at school. Is it not certain that they would be better pleased with a few obvious truths, made more obvious by scriptural proofs, delivered in an agreeable manner?

The triangular preacher, or a good presbyterian, (I use them as synonymous, for I never knew a man who was fairly out of the triangle dignified by that apellation, although, for *my life*, I cannot see why they are not as good as others,) has another method of proving his work than by scripture, and far more agreeable than by the tedious process of argument, however demonstrative. He can with ease prove it by the authority of some of the "*old divines*." And this mode of proof has one advantage over all others whatever; however absurd the point is he wishes to prove, and however false and ridiculous the authority he quotes, yet, generally speaking, the proof he wants coming up suddenly, like Samuel's ghost, out of the sacred gloom of antiquity, any opposition to the argument fares like king Saul—is at once knocked down before it. And since the great object of gospel preaching is to produce "*belief*" in the audience, the quicker that is done the sooner that object is gained, and it is not of so much moment by what methods. In this solitary case we may almost admit that the end sanctifies the means. I might enlarge on this head very much, but it shall suffice to say, that the churches and congregations of the *good presbyterians*, in whom a full and unwavering "belief" is achieved, never trouble themselves about metaphysical disputes nor useless distinctions—are not carried away with every wind of doctrine; and as they believe that "great and general principles are connected, and incorporated in their results," they receive all truth nearly as one proposition, or, at most, as included in two or *three* grand points. They never admit of innovations, and never depart from sound words. When they hear a new preacher they never stand to examine his propositions or arguments; but have only to notice the run of a few sentences, and they can tell whether it is the form of sound words which denote a good presbyterian. But,

2. The good presbyterian holds another advantage, perhaps over most other preachers in the world. He has a faculty of preaching the truth in a way that will never offend his audience. But here some little explanations will be necessary. By *truth* I do not mean absolute and certain truth, but, in general, such matter as makes up his sermons, and which he, in the main, considers as truth, although "it may chance of wheat or some other grain." And by his *audience* I mean that body of people who have set down under his preaching, with their minds made up to like him, for what he is as a man, and a good presbyterian. He may, indeed, have hearers about him who want nothing but metaphysical jargon; who will receive nothing as truth unless made out as tediously as Euclid proves that all the sides of a triangle are equal to two right angles. He may have hearers who expect he will work miracles and who are so distracted as to undertake to weigh all *his* and all their own opinions in the scale of evidence, rejecting every thing which cannot be proved. He may have hearers who will dare audaciously to rip up all the sacred and venerable customs and traditions, which thousands of the gratest and best of men lived, and died, and are gone to heaven in, and if he cannot have them proved by scripture, or by Euclid, will imperiously and rashly reject them. As for these curses to society, and scourges of good presbyterianism, they may never like him or any body else.

But the good presbyterian has the distinguished felicity of pleasing his audience. For this I have the highest authority. A great and learned doctor lately told a young clergyman that there was no necessity of offending people. That for his part he had preached the gospel faithfully, for more than twenty years, in a great and populous city, and had never offended his audience. Perhaps this is a happy secret, known only to the good presbyterian. I believe, however, it may be traced out. I believe I have it; and if so, I shall certainly claim some merit as an original, for setting it before the public for the benefit of all young preachers.

I have reduced this important art into several general propositions, and if in discussing these, any else should appear necessary, it shall be noticed afterwards.

Proposition I.

The preacher of the gospel who does not mean to offend his audience must not disturb their repose, hurt their feelings, or trouble their consciences too much. I do not mean to say that he must never come near the conscience of his audience; that will sometimes be admissible, provided it be prudently managed, not done too frequently, nor pressed too far.

And who can find fault with this rule? It is well known that convicting people of crimes or sins will not reform them. Besides, when you press the gentlest of animals into a corner, they will not fail to turn upon you; much more so will the lion and the wild boar of the forest: whereas, if you allow them a range of field, they will generally be inoffensive. Far be it from me to compare gentlemen and ladies, the refined inhabitants of great and polished cities, to these terrible and ferocious animals. But there is a principle of resistance in every inhabitant of this fallen world, which had better not be pressed too far, nor called into operation at all, unless the strongest necessity require it. What was the effect when even St. Paul himself reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, and made the abandoned and profligate Felix tremble? Why, Felix shunned him ever after, and probably never heard him again. But it must be remembered that St. Paul was inspired to do what he did, therefore could not do otherwise. But as ministers now are not inspired, or at least, not all of them, it stands them in hand to be cautious how they drive away their hearers by pressing upon their consciences.

But, reader, when you see the polite and elegant part of an assembly disgusted because a preacher handles their consciences too freely; when the preacher thunders upon them so terribly that the venerable head of a great man, however oppressed with drowsiness, cannot for a moment recline in soft repose;—the lovely dimpling smiles of some fair creature are superseded by paleness; graceful airs and elegant forms are forgotten, and fanciful dresses, just imported from London and Paris, shall attract no attention;—what are you to think, and what will

people say? Surely they will say, "This man wishes to drive us to heaven: but he is much mistaken. We do not intend to be driven there, even if we condescend to go there at all."

And does not a preacher owe something to humanity and politeness? How much better would be the effect, if, when he ascends the desk, he would adjust his features to the lightsome air of a gay and benignant smile; would modulate his voice to the soft and pleasant tones which regulate the conversations of the polite circles; and when he comes to certain unpleasant and chilling truths, to crave the pardon of his audience, and adopt some little softening circumlocutions, such as an experienced physician would resort to in speaking of an operation to be performed on a child, or some person of delicate nerves, when that person was present. At the same time, the preacher would find it for his interest to hasten over those unpleasant and frightful passages; merely hinting the premises, let him leave his hearers to draw the horrible conclusions, when they were in a proper situation; and not force it upon their attention when in a great and fashionable assembly, where every thing is desired to be soft, charming, and polite, and every well-bred person must appear sprightly and gay.

Much more might be said on this subject, and the young preacher may be assured there is something in it. If he is frequent and pungent in his attempts to reach and alarm the consciences of his hearers, they will dislike him: the refined audiences of great cities will esteem him coarse, vulgar, imprudent, and inhuman. Philosophers will smile at his rawness and want of knowledge: the ladies will style him by no means an agreeable preacher; his most point-blank shots will fall from the aged as hail from a rock of adamant; and they will look up at him and seem as though they would say "Young man, we have often seen young men as zealous and confident as you are:" and it is a chance if the young and gay do not avoid him.

The old divine I spake of, no doubt knew every shade and feature of the human character: he knew well how to manage these things. No wonder, then, that he preached for so many years, and never gave offence.

Proposition II.

A minister of the gospel, who does not mean to give offence, must not cause his audience to mistrust that he aims at their vices. He may, and must preach rousingly against vice and infidelity; but so sure as one of his hearers finds his own vice severely touched, he will be offended. I know a great and popular divine in this city, who will boldly compare infidels to dogs and wild beasts; but he never gives offence. He does it so wittily they like him the better.

The case of Nathan's reproof to David is often urged here; and with as little propriety as was the case of Paul and Felix in the former proposition. Nathan was inspired, and sent as a prophet to reprove king David. But who claims inspiration? And, reader, supposing you knew yourself to be in the habit of telling lies; would you like it if Mr. B—— should meet you in the street to-morrow, and that, too, before a great number of people, and should say to you, "Sir, you are a liar?" And would it not be still more uncivil and unkind to accuse a man before an audience, and at a time when custom has forbidden him to reply in his own defence, to deny, palliate, or vindicate his crime?

As this is a point of great delicacy, it cannot be looked at with too much exactness and attention. And I shall lay down a few principles or maxims which I have deduced from observation of the best models: I mean men famous for never giving offence, yet strenuous preachers against all wickedness.

In the first place, I would recommend to the young preacher not to be too free in naming vices particularly. He may sometimes go so far as to specify certain vices, which are considered as disgraceful and infamous; and, on some rare occasions, may preach a sermon against them. But his duty is to preach the gospel, and, of course, dwelling on particular acts or parts of conduct would not be proper.

Classification is an excellent method of naming vices so as not to give offence. Thus, if one vice is known to prevail, it may be put into a long catalogue, and pronounced with such ve-

hement rapidity as to excite no alarm. And a preacher is particularly cautioned, when he mentions any personal faults or foibles of any of his hearers, to look, at that moment, round into a different quarter of the audience from the place the offenders sit; otherwise they will infallibly be up in arms. And when any particular sin is known to prevail in the audience, it may be safely mentioned, provided some other sin, which does not prevail, is mentioned, soon after it, and dwelt upon with great emphasis and severity.

Let me also remind young preachers, that all the vices connected with wealth and splendour, under certain aspects, are easily introduced into sermons without giving any offence. In this form, indeed, I have sometimes heard the finest and most exquisite compliments paid to men of fortune; and then they will bear some tolerably severe remarks about covetousness, worldly mindedness, luxury, and dissipation. At the very name of such a class of men, I have sometimes noticed a dozen men in an audience appear to swell into a larger size; they would seem to heave upon their seats, somewhat like a great billow from sea, when first it reaches soundings; and would evidently show a conscious pleasure in having perhaps the eyes of one hundred, and the thoughts of five times that number, turned upon them, who envied them the refreshing reproof that fell from the lips of the gentle orator. And when the reproof fell, it was brushed from their eyebrows, without pain or effort, and perhaps with a smile that reflected the orator's compliment, while half the audience would say, in their hearts, "O that I could merit such reproofs!"

But the preacher who makes his hearers feel the force of his censures, and the smart of conviction, will create uneasiness, will procure for himself enemies, and, perhaps, ultimately endanger his salary. Those who will not be instructed by these observations must taste the fruits of their temerity.

Before I leave this proposition, it is important to observe, that there are certain collateral topics which should always be associated with preaching againt particular vices. Nothing is more agreeable to persons guilty of particular sins than to hear it urged, that, after all, it makes but little difference that

those whose exterior is irreproachable, are generally, perhaps, as wicked in some other way. Or if, perhaps, they are not as wicked, it is no thanks to them that they are not a great deal worse than their neighbours. And this, which is no doubt a truth, may, at the same time, be useful to that part of the audience who are not guilty of outbreaking sins; lest they should be tempted to boast and glory over others. And is it not a hard thing that those who are guilty of no immoral overt acts should not be allowed some credit for their morality. Some care must be bestowed on the moral part of the audience; lest, when their ascendency over the vicious and profane is denied or lessened, they are not also offended. But this will be provided for in another part of the subject.

The grand object is to preach the truth, and yet not offend any body; in order to which one general observation is of almost universal use, and it applies with great force to preaching against vice and open immorality. There should be a softness, an urbanity, a "mellowness," as I have sometimes heard it styled, in all the compositions, and addresses, and style, and manner of a preacher. A single qualifying term will turn the arrow aside:—a softening epithet will wrap its point in silk;—a gentle pull at the bow will make it fall short of the mark, or if the speaker will display all his energies, he may, by one kind adjective, or adverb, raise it over the heads of his audience, and then his bow may twang with dreadful sound, and the hissing arrow cut the ethereal arch, and like that of Acestes take fire in the clouds; and the hearers will all rejoice that they are safe while such dreadful bolts are flying.

"Τὸξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτρην
Εκγξαν δ'αροιστοι εμ' ωμων χωομενοια."

Many a frightful storm of eloquence against vice have I heard, which brought to my mind the grand fire-works of Catherine II. in honour of Prince Henry of Prussia. The line was five miles in length, and the imperial court were, for two hours, seated under a continuous arch of brilliant flame.

Proposition III.

Great care must be used in preaching against hypocrisy: there is, perhaps, no class of men so unwilling to be detected as hypocrites. It is not so much on their own account; for they are generally pretty well satisfied, in their own minds, what they are, which is the cause of their extreme sensibility, but they are unwilling to be laid open before others. And this rule applies with nearly equal force to all the vices of the mind, such as pride, malice, covetousness, and others.

What, then, must be said by the preacher in the case of hypocrites? For surely their case cannot be passed over in silence. They are known to be numerous, and their case is a most prominent one. There may be some preachers who are hypocrites themselves, and they will have the advantage of possessing a kind of moral sense about them, which will naturally keep them on the side of prudence. Yet the desire (I will not call it ambition) they may have to be thought pungent, powerful, and faithful preachers, may sometimes carry them too far.

The first rule is never, or very seldom, to preach against hypocrisy professedly; for it is a certain fact, that the delicate nerves and refined feelings of that class of people never can long endure the steady contemplation of that picture, even though drawn in its most favourable colours; but, certainly, if painted in all its hideous deformity, they will rise into opposition, provided they should not sink under conviction—a case very improbable.

In the second place, it is not best for the preacher to intimate any suspicion that there are hypocrites in his audience. For he will thereby subject himself to the charge of judging hearts, and of being unkind and uncharitable in his feelings. Prophets and apostles might lay and substantiate such charges, but uninspired preachers have no right to accuse their hearers of more than they can prove *in foro ecclesiæ*.

In the third place, when hypocrisy is, if it ever is directly

mentioned, or a little enlarged upon, it should be done with a gentle hand, and in a mild and mellow style and manner, as though the preacher could by no means, for a moment, harbour the idea that any thing like it was among his people; yet, lest there might be danger, he should tenderly and most politely persuade them to be careful in comparing their characters with our great standards, and see to it that there was no deficiency. Methinks I can almost hear him with a grave and benignant smile say thus:

"Brethren, I cannot make you more duly sensible than you are, how important it is that you should be genuine and sincere Christians. Think not that I wish to discourage or dishearten you. Let me rather direct your attention to the abundance and fulness of the divine promises. Yet, be exhorted to see to it that your faith is strong and unwavering, that you have an abundance of the divine spirit. Be exhorted not to be fearful and unbelieving, and let your sincerity be incited by the grace of him who has done and promised so much; and since he has promised, do you see that he fulfils his promises; yea, keep him to his word."

And will not an audience understand the meaning of all this? Will they not believe it to be an exhortation against hypocrisy? And why should that horrible, disgusting, unfashionable word be used at all?

Proposition IV.

The preacher that would not give offence must not argue points too painfully, i. e. must never reason very closely, nor very long; much less must he deliver whole sermons, and sermon, after sermon, which consist of compact bodies of solid reasoning. It matters not to suppose his reasoning shall amount to demonstration in every case, for that would be so much the worse. He will fail of his grand object—he will give offence.

Several bad consequences will follow this mode of preaching.

1. The entire frame of the Triangular doctrine depends on what some might perhaps style *mystery* and "*faith*." They

cannot be supported by reasoning; let any one attempt it, and, in spite of all his efforts, they will fall to the ground. This has been often tried, and has often had a similar result. But,

2. Such a strain of argumentative preaching would produce a metaphysical taste in the hearers, who would soon arrive at that pass that they would take no pleasure in loose, incoherent, and declamatory sermons; and would be satisfied with nothing but a systematic strain of reasoning. The young preacher should, therefore, make his discourses as declamatory as possible, which will give scope for energy, zeal, and pathos; and provided he introduces a great many passages of scripture, he will save himself from the charge of being a common-place preacher.

3 Declamatory sermons, with little or no argument, are composed with incomparably less mental labour than those which are truly argumentative and demonstrative. Hence, they are far easier to every grade of talent, and, in fact, may be acquired by men of the most inferior talents. In a great dearth of talents, therefore, who would not think it the most safe course to condemn and reject argumentative preaching as useless, for the sake of adopting a plan far more easy and sure of success? nay, if well followed up, sure of acquiring for a man the reputation of great talents. For, reader, it is a fact, that some of our most wonderfully great men are nothing more than mere declaimers. They have a good deal of promptness and confidence about them; can look as wise as any man living; can assert roundly, and doing this, most people neither know nor care whether the discourse is made up of truisms, common-places, or any thing else, provided the horrible Hopkinsian metaphysical arguments are avoided.

This matter is so extremely important that I must add something, for which some of my readers may have cause to thank me for being tedious. I will put a secret talisman into the hands of the simplest, most feeble, and insipid young man, whereby, in a few years, he shall have two great D's added to his name. Let him but go through college, no matter how lazy and idle he is, he must haggle down a little Latin, and

a very little of tupto, tuptise, &c.; then let him go to the theological school, and fall boldly at the Hebrew, read the first verse of Genesis, and one or two in Psalms. Philosophy, mathematics, history, and works of taste, are of no consequence to him. He must, by and by, attack biblical criticism, and learn how to correct the translation in a dozen or twenty places: make a little noise about Campbell and Stuart, overthrow Locke and Edwards, which he can do in a fortnight, turn over a few old Latin books, such as Turretin, Pictete, and Rigeley, read a little in the expositors and systematics, patch up an exegesis, and write some exercises. He need not read much; must copy a great deal; must talk a great deal; think little; never reason; it is always better to assert, and leave the *onus probandi* to be made out by such as, in their dull wisdom, may want it.

In short, as to learning, he may get more or less as he pleases; his grand object is to arrive at licensure, then the important task commences. In his sermons, frequent quotations from the old divines, and the standards, will be important. It will be unlucky if he can get nothing from the old divines: and, reader, I simply ask the question, whether he may not sometimes quote a sentence from some old divine, even although he never saw the book, provided he is sure he does not differ from that author? For instance, he may sometimes remark, "as says the learned and pious Limborch or Pictete." For it would be a wonder, indeed, if Limborch or Pictete did not say that thing at one time or another. This would be a great help to him on various occasions.

But this young man must preach soundly and roundly the triangle; must assert that mankind have no manner of ability to do any thing;—must have such terms as *spiritual*, *mystery*, *grace*, *imputation*, *federal head*, *covenant*, in every sentence;—must knock down metaphysics, and all trains of reasoning;—must assert very boldly, and make his audience feel that he has authority and power.

His tones and gestures may be taken from a fourth rate actor, provided he can go so high: he must swell up his words with great pomp, and if he can hit a little of the Caledonian

brogue, all the better. Yet all must be done with a pretty air, looking polite, wise, sagacious, profound, and as big as possible.

I believe I need not add, any thing like a con formity to these rules will make the man a public wonder; so that even when he walks the street, modesty will often compel him to lower down his hat, and hide his face, to escape the ardent gaze of obtrusive curiosity.—*Dico quid scio.*

Beside these pulpit qualifications, there are some others of great importance, in their influence, and their best recommendation is that they cost little labour or effort. This young man must early and strongly attach himself to great men, and leading characters, whether great or little. He must never oppose their measures, dispute their sentiments, nor expose their foibles; must be ready to second their motions, trumpet their praise, humour their passions, flatter their prejudices, imbibe their ideas, and disseminate their opinions. He must, indeed, suffer these men to stand upon his shoulders, and if they now and then kick a little, not seem to mind it—that by their influence, in due time, he may stand upon the shoulders of others. There is vast science in this system, from which through a legal and visible hierarchy is excluded, with great abhorrence yet all its benefits are countervailed by a texture of influence and interest, wrought into a fabric of equal height and solidity. A hierarchy is a real staircase cut round a pyramid, on every step of which men have a level foothold firm and easy. But where no stairs are cut in the smooth steep, the ascending and superincumbent fabric of power is sustained and pushed upwards, by extended substructions of broad and brawny shoulders below. I shall say little about it: but if a man would hope to rise, he must apply his shoulders to the timbers he can reach, and it is no great matter where he begins. However, he must bow himself, like Sampson, but for a different purpose. Yet it will generally happen, that while he pushes some upwards, he must pull others downwards. Thus, by a nice eye, a resolute hand, and due dexterity, he will first perhaps be in *equilibrio*, then buoyant, at length rampant, and, last of all, salient. He will then naturally plant his feet on shoulders, or heads, below; but must never cease to shove those about him, that he may rise

after them. These are hints by-the-by; and a word to the wise is sufficient. But here sometimes is witnessed a curious scuffle, which would give scope to the pencil of Hogarth, or the pen of Butler.

I should now proceed to the third and last, and by far the greatest quality of the good presbyterian, in the true technical import of the phrase. But the very great importance of the subject, together with some original hints, seem to forbid it a place in this series. It will appear in the next. Indeed, if I have been so fortunate as to lay down rules whereby a minister may preach, and not offend his audience, in this refined and fastidious age, I think the rest may safely be put off for a few weeks.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. V.

There is no point more importunately urged by the triangular divines, than that the understanding of the sinner is as much depraved as the will. To make out this doctrine, they set their best metaphysical powers and talents in the most logical array. There is not room to enter largely into this discussion, at present; nor, indeed, can I conceive that much room or time is necessary to present the subject in a point of light both intelligible and satisfactory.

The zeal which prompts these strenuous endeavours to make out the depravity of the understanding, arises from their professed desire to make the doctrine of depravity complete, affecting all parts of the soul alike, and, as they allege, to deprive the sinner of all opportunity to boast, or glory, in any thing which he has, while in a state of impenitence; and to make out his natural state to be the most ruined and the worst possible. In their notions of the depravity of the understanding, they find their chief countenance and support for denying and rejecting

the doctrine of *moral inability;* for they say as the understanding is as deeply depraved as the will, there must, therefore, be something in the way of a sinner's return to holiness and to God, beside merely the want of will, or disposition to do it.

If a mere persuasion could alter the natural condition of men; if believing our state to be better or worse than it is, would make it better or worse, there would be a motive to distort evidence, to shut our eyes against light, and to wrest the scriptures in which our characters are faithfully portrayed. But, as things are, our highest interest, and only security, seems greatly to depend on our having just conceptions of our condition, without which we can hardly be supposed to receive, or appreciate, the remedy God has provided.

I shall convey my opinion on this subject to the reader, under the following particulars:—

1. The will, or, what is usually termed the moral faculty of the soul, is that alone which has any concern with sin or holiness, virtue or vice, or by what ever name those things may be called. On the contrary, the understanding, or intellect, is that faculty of the mind of which knowledge or ignorance is alone predicable. It is the perceiving faculty, the eye of the soul; and, according as it is differently modified, it is the fountain of reason, memory, judgment, &c.

Depravity, as far as sin or holiness, right or wrong, are concerned, has no connexion with the understanding, is not predicable of it, any more than it is a material substance, such as stone or timber. So, on the other hand, neither is knowledge, reason, memory, or judgment, predicable of the will, or moral faculty. They, indeed, both belong to the soul, yet they are departments distinct from, and independent of, each other. Whoever asserts that the understanding is *depraved*, may as correctly assert, that the will reasons or perceives; *i. e.* if he means any thing more than that there is a want of knowledge, judgment, or power of perception in the understanding.

2. By depravity of understanding, then, must be meant ignorance, the want of knowledge, or of strength of faculty to acquire it. I might more largely justify and demonstrate these positions, but they will not be denied. It then remains to in-

quire what necessary and established, or adventitious and accidental connexion there is between wickedness of heart and depravity of understanding, or ignorance, by which I mean the same thing. And this inquiry will naturally resolve itself into two parts, viz. as it relates to reason and experience, and as it relates to the express testimony of scripture.

1. The light of reason and experience affords no evidence that there is any *necessity*, or *immediate* connexion between sin and ignorance, either as cause and effect, or as inseparable concomitants.

Sin is a free, or voluntary act; and, for aught we can see, requires and implies as much voluntariness and intellect—as much moral liberty and knowledge as holiness. Sin is a transgression of the law of God; but the great command of the law is, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.*" Now, we have no evidence that the first sin of Satan, or of Adam, or that any subsequent sin of fallen angels, or men, was occasioned by ignorance, or caused ignorance, *i. e.* necessarily and immediately.

No mortal knows what the soul is; no mortal can say that a sinful act of the will instantly detracts, or cuts off, a single ray of light from the understanding, or renders the understanding, at the next moment, feebler in its perceptive, retentive, reminiscent, or conceptive powers. I speak now of the light of reason and experience merely. I can readily conceive, and shall presently show, how a simple state may draw after it a state of ignorance, but this is voluntarily done, and is wholly adventitious to a sinful state.

Experience daily shows us, that a local disease in the body, by the force of corporeal sympathies and connexions, may cause a morbid diathesis through the system; thus, a slight puncture in the foot may bring on all the horrible train of tetanic symptoms. But who can tell me, by the light of reason and philosophy, or by any other light, in what incorporeal essence the various faculties of the soul inhere, so connected by a common sensorium, that when one becomes diseased, all the rest are ne-

cessarily and essentially impaired? If we have such a philosopher amongst us, I could wish he would come out and publish his knowledge for the benefit of mankind.

Sin neither originated in a mistake, nor does it proceed on that footing. The most sinful being in the universe, is, perhaps, inferior in knowledge to no creature, and, in fact, the sin of our first parents is rather represented as an increase, than a diminution of knowledge.* Sin against God does by no means consist in hating a mistaken notion of God, but in hating the true God; and experience will not show that the most wicked men have generally been the most ignorant.

The great point I would lay down, and endeavor to establish, is, that neither reason nor experience has given us any knowledge of the nature and properties of the soul, whereby we can certainly conclude, that the immediate and necessary effect of sin on the soul is to diminish the stock of knowledge already acquired, or to enfeeble the power of acquiring any further knowledge, such as the soul may wish and seek to acquire.

As to reason alone, aided by all its most diligent researches into the nature and properties of the soul, it wholly fails in this inquiry, and cannot afford one ray of evidence that the intellect of a wicked man or angel, is less acute or powerful in discovering facts, or in making comparisons or deductions, than that of a holy man or angel. A similar result is obtained by resorting to all that experience can afford on this subject. Indeed, experience is as lame as reason; the one being ignorant of what the soul is, as to its substance and structure, if those terms are applicable to a purely spiritual being; and the other being unfurnished with data from whence a fair comparison can be made.

To institute a comparison between the knowledge and acquisition of holy and sinful angels, would be an attempt to judge of things beyond our sphere of knowledge. Had there been two human pairs created instead of one—had one of them remained holy, and produced a race of holy and perfect people, and could we have had access to both races, we might then have made some comparisons useful to this inquiry. But among the de-

* And the Lord God said, behold! the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. Gen. iii. 22.

scendants of one fallen race, we discover no means of making such a comparison just or certain. Pious or holy men discover no more strength of intellect than wicked men. It will be readily granted that they have more wisdom; but wisdom embraces more than mere intellect, and cannot be separated from moral virtue or holiness.

The understanding may be called the eye of the soul, as it is the perceiving faculty. Now, it is evident, that sin injures many of the corporeal faculties. Indeed, the whole province of the passions and appetites, to say the least, as truly belong to the body as to the mind. But they are deeply injured by sin. In fine, those faculties of the body, which are more immediately connected with, and adapted to, the will or moral powers of the soul, are all injured by sin, are rendered exorbitant, corrupt, and perverse. But is a man's eyesight or hearing injured? Does not a wicked man see with the bodily eye as sharply as a good man? Does he not hear as well? Is he not as good a judge of music or painting as a good man? Is it probable that Enoch or Elijah, who attained to immortality, without tasting death, or that Jeremiah or St. John, who were sanctified from the womb, had better eyesight or hearing, or, in short, had more strength and acuteness of intellect, than Socrates or Aristotle?

What man's intellectual powers might have been had he never fallen; how he would have progressed in knowledge and intellectual capacity, furnishes, I am aware, a fine field for the play of the imagination, and for the looser powers of declamation, and I have often heard it dwelt upon with beautiful flowers and fine flourishes. And all these things might have been true, from circumstances wholly adventitious to the present argument. "Had man not fallen," says the devout Flavel, "all truths would have been obvious to his view, in their comely order and ravishing beauty." And are they not now, with an order as comely, and a beauty as ravishing, to every one, who does not voluntarily shut his eyes upon them? To shut the eye, Reader, is a very different affair from a want of eyesight; so, voluntary ignorance is no certain proof of weakness of intellect, but rather of moral depravity.

But these metaphysicians have an easy method of confuting the foregoing remarks. They say, wicked men have knowledge and understanding in "*naturals*," as they are pleased to phrase it, but not in *spirituals*. And the ground they take, here, unites two qualities seemingly of an opposite nature: extreme absurdity, and great adaptedness to the prejudices of weak minds; and these qualities are not unfrequently observed to meet in the same opinions.*

I should reserve the consideration of this opinion till we come to examine the light of scripture on this subject, but that it seems necessarily connected with some observations which

* Dr. M'Leod, in a volume of Sermons just published, (Serm. p. 4. 122.) remarks, "The human mind is capable of perceiving the force of a syllogism, or the truth of a mathematical proposition; but is devoid of *spiritual* discrimination." To prove this, he quotes the following scripture: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God."

The text he quotes, no doubt, has an important meaning, and is true—but nothing to his purpose. The Doctor's notion of spiritual illumination, spiritual understanding, spiritual knowledge, and twenty other spirituals, may be said to form the prominent trait in the scheme of godliness laid down in these sermons. It is set up as a main pillar, and, I fear, the parts of the structure that rest upon it are but ill supported. By classing it with a syllogism and a mathematical proposition, I presume the Doctor will not complain that injustice is done him, by saying that he alludes wholly to the intellect or understanding. Now, admitting that spiritual illumination relates merely to the intellect, and has concern with truth and matters of fact, I would earnestly intreat him to inform the public of one truth, or matter of fact, contained in all religion, which the "human mind," as such, without any reference to moral character, cannot understand, cæteris paribus, as well as it can a syllogism or mathematical proposition. But, says the objector, "these are speculative truths." What then? The most perfect knowledge cannot go beyond a rational and full conviction of a truth. People lose themselves in the fogs of mysticism, and they should read the story of Poole's fiery dragon. "But the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God," says the Doctor. Surely not, I reply, till such time as God makes them known; which he has most abundantly done. The will of God, I suppose, is one of the things, nay, comprehends many of the things, of God. But who were those that knew their master's will and did it not, who were to be beaten with many stripes?—Who was it, that when they knew God, glorified him not as God? Spiritual illumination, understanding, knowledge, discernment, &c. reader, has some concern with the beauty of truth; but to see *beauty* is to LOVE.

must be subjoined to this head. To this opinion of theirs I reply,

1. What they or others can mean by knowledge of "*spirituals*," or of spiritual things, has no conexion with a man's intellectual capacity, strength of understanding, or, in short, *knowledge*, according to the true import of that word; and, of course, forms no part of the inquiry, whether the understanding is as much depraved as the will. They admit the will is totally depraved, i. e. wholly sinful. Now, if the understanding is, in its kind, as much depraved as the will, then it must be totally dark. All knowledge must be extinguished, for ever; as well as all power, ever more, to acquire knowledge. I say again, *all* knowledge, absolutely, must be put out, like a burning coal dropped into a river, from which, in an instant, every spark of light and heat is excluded. The entire intellect must be destroyed. For they must be made to see that their idle distinction, between natural and spiritual knowledge, will not be able to save them in this extremity. For they admit the will to be entirely depraved, and this depravity extends as much into what they call *naturals* as *spirituals*. The wickedness of the human will is not limited to spiritual things. It is depraved in all its volitions—in all its exercises. "The imagination of man's heart is only evil, and that continually." "There is none that doeth good, no, not one. They are together become unprofitable; their throat is an open sepulchre, their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their way; the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes."

Such is the sinner's depravity of heart or will, and it is indeed total, because excluded from no volition, act, or intention. Now, if his understanding, according to its kind and nature, is as totally depraved as the will, it must certainly extend to every perception—there can nothing be left of it: it must be extinct. For as I have shown, depravity of understanding can consist in nothing but ignorance and weakness; and, while any thing is left, it cannot be totally depraved. The depravity of the will is perversion; but that of the understanding, from its nature

and kind, must be privation; and if both are total, the consequence I state must follow.

2. As we discover nothing by reason or experience which proves that depravity of will is necessarily connected with depravity of understanding, as all the advantage gained here is from the sole argument, termed *petitio principii*, so, a much more important question is begged in setting up the distinction between natural and spiritual things, or natural and spiritual knowledge. There is, perhaps, not a more fruitful source of error than this distinction, as set up and applied, by them, to religious doctrine.

There is, indeed, such a thing as spiritual knowledge or understanding, which, I shall hereafter show, relates principally, if not wholly, to the heart, or the moral powers of the soul; which goes into the nature of true holiness, and of which wicked men are incapable. But we have no concern with that kind of knowledge in an inquiry whether the understanding is depraved.

God's kingdom is made up of spiritual beings; that is, of pure spirits, such as God himself, and angels; of beings which are mixed and composed of matter and spirit; and such are mankind—of animals, vegetables, and inorganic matter. These various modes of being together with their characters, spheres of action, properties, affections, and offices, are the proper subjects of knowledge. Now, nothing can be more evident than that a wicked creature, whose will is totally depraved, is as truly susceptible of the knowledge of these various orders of being, of their characters and attributes, as a holy creature. I think nothing but incorrigible ignorance, or incurable prejudice, will undertake to deny this. A wicked, depraved creature can, beyond all question, form as correct a notion of any one being that exists, as a holy creature can, provided he be furnished with the means of information.

There are immaterial beings, and such are the supreme being himself, as well as the various orders of angels: we ourselves have an immaterial, or incorporeal part, called the soul, which part is neither visible, audible, nor tangible, to the bodily organs, and is immortal. But these truths are as justly appre-

hended by bad men, as good. God is infinite, eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, and immutable. He is the sole creator and governor of all creatures; rational creatures are accountable to him for their conduct, as to their supreme moral ruler and universal father. They are all governed by one law—the general and grand obligation of which is supreme love to God, and perfect obedience to all his requirements. But there is nothing in all this which wicked men and devils may not, and do not, as truly understand, as good men and holy angels.

The nature and obligations of the law of God are as truly understood by wicked men as good men. There is nothing in the guilt of sin, the nature of holiness, the notion and necessity of pardon, which is unintelligible to the depraved heart; and, in a word, the government God exercises over his creatures, in all its parts, is as easily and truly understood as the government of an earthly monarch, and as much more so as the divine laws are more clear and simple, more evidently just and excellent, than human laws, with this only difference, that the good man loves, and the wicked man hates them.

Furthermore, the scheme of salvation, by Christ, is no less plainly set forth, and clearly understood, by sinful creatures, than the other parts of the divine dispensations. The sinner as truly and justly feels himself condemned by the divine, as by human laws. The nature and force of conviction are often equally plain, and far stronger in the latter, than in the former case; and the whole character and work of Christ, his power and willingness to save the sinner; the duties he enjoins as essential to discipleship, and incitements he offers as powerful motives of action, are all perfectly clear to every apprehension, as I trust I shall soon show, under its proper head. But at present I say, that, as to every purpose of intellect, knowledge, reason, understanding, these subjects are as plain as any other subjects, in proportion to the intelligence afforded concerning them, and that is abundant; plain as the arts and sciences, as history, geography, laws, or manners.

There are certainly mysterious points in the great doctrines of revelation, as there are, at least, as many in natural religion, and even in nature itself. But these are not mysterious to

wicked men, as such, speculatively considered. They are equally so to good men, saving what results from greater attention; and it is beyond all doubt, a fact, that many a wicked, unregenerate man, has a far more correct knowledge of the great doctrines of revelation, than some good and very pious Christians have. As far as the bare intellect is concerned, they are far sounder in the faith, in the range of knowledge common to both; besides that, they have ten, perhaps a hundred times the range, or extent of knowledge, in the whole plan of truth. And the spiritual discernment of a Christian is his perception of the loveliness of truth, and the God of truth, in which he differs from the sinner.

Seldom did the grand adversary of God and man ever lay a deeper snare for the feet of the unwary, than is perceivable in this most absurd and insidious error. The term *spiritual*, misunderstood, and misapplied, is the bait or lure which leads thousands of simple souls after an *ignis fatuus* into total darkness. The supporters of this distinction must take one of the two following grounds: either,

A Christian must needs have two intellects, and two kinds of knowledge, a natural and a spiritual. The natural, or unrenewed man, they say, has no spiritual knowledge; of course, his spiritual intellect is totally dark; and this lays the foundation of an inability to come to Christ, independent of his will. Or,

2. The soul having but one intellect or understanding, must, nevertheless, be capable of two kinds of knowledge, viz. natural and spiritual, and the latter must be wholly destroyed by sin, or else it cannot be equally depraved with the will. If the understanding retains the least degree of spiritual knowledge, it cannot be totally depraved, and their scheme is overthrown.

But, reader, what matchless and incredible absurdity meets the eye, and shocks the common sense, of every mind in this scheme. And this rises obviously and wholly from the looseness of their metaphysical reasoning.

Spiritual knowledge, or understanding, can man but one of two things. Either,

1. The knowledge, or understanding which any rational mind may have about spiritual beings. For example, whoever

knows there is a God, that his perfections are infinite, eternal, and immutable; that there is a heaven and a hell—a future state; that the soul is immortal; that there are good and bad angels; that God governs creatures by a moral law, &c. has knowledge, or understanding, of spiritual things, and, of course, has spiritual knowledge. Or,

2. Which is the common scripture use of the phrase, a heart and disposition attached to spiritual things; in a word, love to spiritual objects, or holy love. But the want of this is the very essence of moral depravity—is sin in itself, and bears no relation to depravity of understanding, or relevancy to this argument.

As far as mere intellect is concerned, the understanding is certainly less depraved than the will, and it will be no easy matter to prove that it is depraved at all, or, in any degree, as an immediate and necessary consequence, or concomitant, of depravity of will. And as to two kinds of knowledge, as relates to the intellect alone, nothing can be more absurd than the supposition. There is nothing in sin which impairs the sinner's knowledge of spiritual beings, of his own duty and obligations, or of his guilt and danger. And this, I trust, will appear to be the light of the sacred scriptures on this *subject*. Nevertheless, it is proper here to observe,

3. Sin may be, and is, remotely and consequentially, the cause of much ignorance, not only of God and divine things, but of all branches of human knowledge. But this, as I said above, is adventitious to the nature of sin, and its immediate and genuine effect on the mind. The degeneracy of the human race into a state of extreme ignorance, in consequence of sin, is no certain proof that intelligent creatures, placed in other circumstances, would become ignorant, or would not, in fact, increase in knowledge. It is certain that many wicked men have made great progress in knowledge, not only in arts and sciences, but in the doctrines of religion. Yet it would be reasonable to suppose, that depraved and sinful beings would take little satisfaction in meditating in religious truth, which condemned their conduct, or endeavouring to improve their knowledge of God, whom they hated. It might be presumed that

they would "not like to retain God in their knowledge." And they accordingly say in their hearts, "Depart from us, O Lord, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

It will be readily granted that the extreme ignorance of savage nations has been caused by sin; or, perhaps, more properly speaking, that their moral depravity has been the cause of their not rising from a savage into a civilized state. But it would be easy to show, by the most copious and minute details of argument, that the ignorance which sin occasions is a voluntary ignorance; that sin depraves the understanding, by shutting the eye of the soul, that is, withdrawing its attention from the most important objects, thence inducing a voluntary or wilful blindness, and not by producing a physical effect on the understanding, causing an unavoidable, a necessary ignorance, which, whether the sinner will or not, will prevent him from coming to the saving knowledge of truth.

4. It will be readily perceived that the loss of external and adventitious advantages to gain knowledge, whether greater or less, occasioned by the fall of man, cannot be taken into the number of the arguments in support of the depravity of the understanding. The certainty that a ship cannot sail where there is no water, is no certain proof that there is any deficiency or derangement of its constituent parts. We might presume, from the light of reason, and much more from the light of revelation, that if man had never fallen, his intercourse with his Maker would have been attended with the greatest improvements in knowledge and wisdom. Sin, which alienated his heart from God, and withdrew his attention from the glorious fountain of knowledge and excellence, occasioned the loss of those divine communications which would have enriched him in every mental and moral quality which adorn and dignify a rational creature.

But it must be remembered, that a similar withdraw of those divine communications from man, had he remained uncorrupted by sin, would have lessened, to an amazing degree, the resources of his improvement; and probably even the strength and acuteness of his intellect. But when we undertake to examine the goodness of an organ, of an eye, for instance, we do

not put it in a dungeon—we do not withdraw from it the objects of vision—we do not induce the person to whom it belongs to shut it from the light. How absurd would it be for a man to shut up his eyes, and then say, "alas! what shall I do? my eyesight is totally depraved—I cannot see!" And this is substantially the case with a sinner.

5. It is not to be understood, from the foregoing observations, that I affirm that sin may not produce an immediate, and even a physical effect on the human intellect, impairing its power, acuteness, and general usefulness. All that I contend for is, that this is a point which we cannot determine from any knowledge we derive from reason and experience concerning the nature of the soul. We know not whether sin might not have impaired every intellectual function or operation. We cannot assuredly deny that sin has not only impaired the powers of the soul, that we know, and are acquainted with, but has, moreover, obstructed and concealed others which, in the incipient stages of being, had not time to be elicited, matured, and brought into action.

The ground I take is, that reason, common observation, and all experience, demonstrate that men's understandings are less affected by sin than their wills; that we have no certain evidence that the intellect, considered as a faculty of the soul, is, in any manner, immediately, and necessarily, impaired by sin; but especially, whether more or less, whether a great deal, or not at all affected, it is, to all intents and purposes, as sound, strong, and acute, in relation to one object as another; that, if it is less successful and correct in religious, than in worldly matters, it is solely owing to less means of information, or less attention to the means afforded; that the distinction of spiritual, from other knowledge, is wholly without foundation.

Knowledge has to do with truth and facts, and is derived from various sources; but as to its conception and mode, in the human mind, it is *one*. It cannot rise higher than to a rational and full conviction. Whether a truth is made known to me by God himself by an angel, or by a man; whether I gain it by intuition, deduction, sensation, or reflection, when I once, in fact, have it, it stands, in my mind, together with all other truth, on the same ground of intellection.

This notion of the depravity of the understanding, whereby the whole body of religious truths and doctrines is covered with an inscrutable veil of mystery, is one of the boldest and most mischievous of Satan's devices. Under the shameful pretence of paying a high compliment to the sacredness of truth, they cover it from human eyes with a cloud, not of mystery, but of mist, which, following their definitions, no mortal can understand; and under a pretence of setting human nature low, they release the conscience from remorse, and a moral agent from his duty.

That the spiritual discernment, or understanding of truth, relates to its moral excellence and beauty, and belongs to the will and affections of the soul, is evidently agreeable to the whole tenor of the scriptures. This I shall endeavour to show, in considering what light the scriptures throw on the doctrine of the depravity of the understanding. But this must be reserved to the next series.

The intelligent and candid reader will perceive a wide difference between him who shuts his eyes to avoid seeing, and him who was born blind. The former of these cases answers to the conduct of men; hence, saith the word of God, "This is the condemnation that light has come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

INVESTIGATOR.

No. VI.

Docter M'Leod's Sermons.

A volumn of sermons, entitled "The Life and Power of Godliness," lately published, is before the public. The imposing title of this work, and the acknowledged talents of its author, will procure for it a share of the public attention; and, if jus-

tice has been done to a subject of such importance, few books can be deserving of a larger share. If the writer has truly informed the public what godliness is, and wherein its life and power consist, he has redeemed his pledge, laid down with an immeasurable responsibility, and, to say nothing of the reward of human approbation—to overlook the pleasing consciousness, the noble gratification of having edified the church of Christ, and presented before the wicked many of the best motives to repentance, a far richer reward awaits his labours—the high and eternal approbation of the Supreme Judge of human actions.

Though the task with which he charged himself can be but poorly performed by one who does not live the life and feel the power of godliness, yet I am far from making his production a criterion to judge of his personal piety, a topic with which neither the critic, the theologian, nor the reviewer, has any concern; and concerning which, general reputation, and the more amiable dictates of character, have secured to him a favourable decision. I cannot, however, avoid the persuasion, that the choice of his subject was not peculiarly fortunate, nor well adapted to his genius and turn of mind. But of this the reader will judge for himself. Some men are sons of thunder, some of consolation; and when a true son of thunder gets on themes of consolation, we may apply to him the language of Garrick, "When Johnson writes tragedy, declamation roars, and passion sleeps."

These sermons are by no means destitute of brilliancy of expression, and force of thought. Justice cannot deny that they evince marks of genius of no ordinary grade; but I am sorry to be compelled to add, that here her claims of commendation generally end.

Another day must determine whether it is my infelicity, or that of this writer, that we differ in many of the most material positions which he takes. If I can discover in this work any thing like a description of divine life, its pulsations are feeble, and it still wears the mortal hue. Indeed, a glance through the volume rather presents darkness, impotence, and confusion, than "*life* and *power*," and reminds me of that strong expression in the liturgy, "In the midst of life, we are in death."

The Doctor, in his introductory sermon, lays before the reader

his view of what he styles "THE PECULIAR EXCELLENCIES OF THE GOSPEL." These he comprises in four articles, viz.

1. "The Christian religion alone proposes to man friendship and communion with God, in a mediator; and effects reconciliation, by providing a Mediator perfectly qualified for the purpose."

2. "Christianity is the only religion which provides perfect satisfaction to divine justice for all the sins of them who are reconciled to God."

3. "Evangelical religion alone secures to man a change of mind, by supernatural power, from sinfulness to holiness."

4. "Evangelical religion secures for believers a title to a place in heaven, on account of the merits of the Redeemer."

I earnestly intreat the reader to resort to this book, and read the Doctor's own illustration of these propositions; and for the same reason I could wish this book might be generally read. For if there be proportion, beauty, force, and grandeur, in truth and godliness—if there be distortion, turpitude, obscurity, and confusion in error, the eye that is not covered with scales of blindness, will not read the book but with progressing conviction, and it will serve as a caustic to bring a callous sore to due sensibility.

My comment on the four propositions will be short; but as they are set up as the four cardinal points of gospel excellence, I cannot pass by them in silence.

His first proposition is certainly true, upon my principles, and certainly false upon his; and is a hook of error baited with truth.

His second proposition contradicts the first; while it expresses a truth, implies an error; and as Christ's satisfaction to justice is certainly the ground upon which the gospel "*proposes to man friendship and communion with God*," these two propositions present the figure of a pyramid set upon its apex with its base in the air; and had it been composed of stone instead of words, the author's head would have been in danger. My meaning is, that he grounds an offer of life and immortality to all men on a propitiation made for a part.

His third proposition is true; but he covers it with darkness in his illustration of it. He talks much about its excellent morality; but what then? His hearers are taught to believe that there is no such thing as moral virtue. He says the gospel sets

before men the whole system of religious truth, but then their understandings are totally depraved, and they are none the better without supernatural illumination. He says, with great emphasis, that the gospel requires holiness. "*Evangelical religion*," says he, "*describes holiness in the clearest terms, requires it by the purest precepts, illustrates it by the best examples, and urges it by the tenderest motives.*" A climax!

But, reader, does he tell you what that holiness is to which the gospel recovers man? No. Does he tell you what that change of mind is which is effected by supernatural power? No. Those topics, I must presume, were thought too mysterious for explanation.

His fourth proposition, though, in a sense, true, since Christians are certainly saved by grace, yet, as it here stands, in the writer's sense of it, and illustrated by his own remarks, I consider it as one of the most bold, arrogant, and audacious strokes of Antinomian pride and vanity. And I must again beg of the reader to examine the proofs he brings of the truth of this proposition. He alleges nothing like proof—nothing in the shape of demonstration—not even the ghost of evidence—not even the abortion of an argument; and the propositions he brings in its support are still more doubtful than his premises. I shall close, for the present, by applying to these sermons the words of Dr. Fuller, a writer recommended by the triangular divines of this city. (See Fuller's life of Pierce, p. 249.)

"If a man, whatever be his depravity, be necessarily a free agent, and accountable for all his dispositions and actions; if gospel invitations be addressed to men, not as elect, nor as non-elect, but as sinners exposed to the righteous displeasure of God; if Christ's obedience and death rather increase than diminish our obligations to love God, and one another; if faith in Christ be a falling in with God's way of salvation, and unbelief a falling out with it; if sanctification be a progressive work, and so essential a branch of our salvation as that without it no man shall see the Lord; if the holy spirit instruct us in nothing by his illuminating influences but what was already revealed in the scriptures, and which we should have perceived but for that we loved darkness rather than light; and if he inclines us to nothing but what was antecedently right, or to such a spirit as every intelligent creature ought, at all times, to have possessed,"

then are these sermons far, very far, from being a true exhibition of the life and power of godliness, or of gospel truth. But they will be further considered.

INVESTIGATOR.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH SERIES.

This series will close the first part of the Triangle, a work which has roused a storm of indignation and fury, whose rage appears not yet to be wholly spent. I have been quite happy, however, to perceive, that it has hitherto been harmless in its progress, as it has unroofed no buildings on the land, nor unmoored any vessels in the harbour, though it has been attended with great noise, with most obstreperous clamours, some "gnashing of teeth," and terrible threats of vengeance.

A point blank shot was some time since aimed at the Triangle, or rather The Investigator, but it was, perhaps, lucky for him that this shot was discharged, not from the *Great Gun*, but from a very little Gun, of short barrel, and wide caliber; and it appears, from some oversight in loading, that the powder was so inadequate to the weight of the charge, that the whole load fell on the ground, not many yards from the muzzle, where it still lies, and may be seen by those whose curiosity may prompt inspection. The wad smoked a little, affording a delightful fumigation for triangular noses, but soon went out.

The general object of the Triangle has been to expose the spirit of intolerance and persecution, become so conspicuous, so bold, and daring, in this city, for the last few years, and so insupportably oppressive to a certain class of people. A long train of events speaks with a voice of thunder on this subject: A numerous and powerful phalanx of men have long since laid off the mask—have boldly avowed the purpose of restraining the opinions of the immense population of this city, to their own creed—or, shall I say, to their own narrow and contracted views of the great doctrines of religion.

The attempts of an individual to breast the torrent of popular opinion are always considered by the weak and wavering as hopeless and useless, by the leaders and demagogues of the multitude, as audacious and wicked; of course, they are seldom made: for some, consulting their ease and popularity, others their convenience and interest; some governed by darling prejudices, and others, (not a few,) wrapped in the midnight gloom of ignorance, it is found, by designing men, but an easy task to lead the multitude at their will; and the history of the church, in all ages, and in all its sections, affords a voluminous comment on this subject. But if this comment be voluminous, there is another not less so: the readiness with which the great body of Christians,

and all ambitious men, identify religion with their temporal interests, is the true source of that overbearing and furious spirit which has ever harassed the church, endeavouring to bear down all before it. It is not the solemn scenes of eternity—the glory of the Almighty God—the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom —the salvation of immortal souls—the terrors of the coming judgment—the pure and supreme joys of an eternal heaven—nor the endless torments of hell, which form any part of the motives of *their* conduct, who would square down men's consciences to their particular views of truth. No! no! far other motives are at bottom; it is the base ambition of mounting on the empty blast of Fame—the rage after a poor and short-lived influence over men—the desire to be esteemed leaders and rulers over a large number of wretched beings, who are born for the awful destinies of eternity.

Were the love and fear of God the predominating principle of their hearts, all these angry feelings would melt away; their weapons would fall from their nerveless hands, and they would find much more cause to quarrel with themselves, than with their neighbours; and their resentment at those who differed from them, would suddenly change into apprehension and alarm for their own future prospects.

INVESTIGATOR.

THE TRIANGLE.

FIFTH SERIES.

No. I.

Depravity of Understanding considered, and concluded from the Fourth Series.

PART II.

Video mellora, proboque; deteriora sequor.--*Seneca.*

THE holy scriptures, in relation to the impediments in the sinner's salvation, are far from placing the will and the understanding on the same footing. They nowhere represent the understanding as being as depraved as the heart or will, which I here use as synonymous terms, or as being the cause of the sinner's destruction. Directly the reverse of this breathes in every sentiment, and speaks in every page of the sacred volume.

While the depravity of the heart is universally set up as the first, the last, and the only cause of the sinner's ruin, the understanding, whether more or less enlightened, is declared to have sufficient light to leave the sinner "without excuse," and to make his destruction chargeable alone to his free and voluntary choice.

Were not the motive but too well known; were not this sentiment identified as an integral part of a hideous and loathsome scheme of antinomian tenets, where at every step the principles of eternal justice are sacrificed to the monstrous brood engendered by darkness and superstition, where benevolence and virtue are immolated at the shrine of selfishness, and where defor-

mity itself is the only rule of proportion, it would seem surprising, that any one who had read the bible could pretend to draw, from that exhaustless storehouse of truth, a doctrine so opposite to the blazing light of experience, to the steady, constant, and universal voice of reason, and to the innumerable and express declarations of that sacred book.

There is, probably, not a sentiment which ever engaged the attention of the human mind, in which all mankind, in all ages and nations, are more unanimous, than that *men know better than they do.* A savage, a philosopher, a heathen, a christian, a jew, a mahometan, will readily grant it, and whoever is a spectator of human actions, cannot fail to know it. Ignorant as a man is, or can be, his passions and inclinations will overleap the bounds of his reason, and his own conscience will directly tell him so, and reprove him. Nor was ever a code of morality taught on earth which so completely imbibed the inclinations of the heart, as to annihilate the sphere of conscience, and supervene all the dictates of reason.

The scriptures teach that where there is great light, or knowledge of duty, that there the guilt of disobedience is great, and so, in general, they apportion the degree of guilt to that of knowledge.

Judge Blackstone somewhere remarks, that a man, ignorant of human laws, who falls into transgression, may, through the imperfection of human administration, be holden to the legal penalty, but, nevertheless, cannot be, in the eye of society, or even of the law itself, impeached of moral or political turpitude, unless the transgression be of a nature which the universal laws of society forbid; which qualification supposes that he might have known better.

If a total ignorance of every thing whatever, amounting to the entire privation of reason, would exclude all accountableness, as is supposed to be the case with idiots and maniacs, or with beasts and incogitative machines, then a total ignorance of any one thing places a man, in relation to that thing, as though it did not exist.

I am fully aware of the famous, but senseless, dispute which is raised here. The objector says, "But supposing a man has de-

stroyed his own knowledge, or caused his own ignorance, what then?" And this same cavil is introduced on the subject of inability, and indeed, is a part of it; for they say, the sinner has destroyed his own ability—therefore, since he did it himself, he is still held to perform.

There is not room to enter into this subtle point of metaphysics here. Nor is it of much importance, since both the premises and the conclusion of the argument, as they use it, are false; for in the first place, sinners neither do, nor can, destroy their ability to obey God, further than consists in depravation of will; and, in the second place, if they could, the conclusion they draw would not certainly follow.

Supposing a man commits suicide, hangs himself, and goes out of the world, is he still under obligation to live with his family and carry on his business?—A man cuts off his legs, is he after that under obligation to run a race?—After a man has put out his own eyes, does he commit sin for neglecting to perform the duties which require eyesight?

This subject requires careful reflection; and I think but little penetration is sufficient to enable any man to perceive that one natural impossibility as effectually bars obligation as another. If I am the only pilot of a vessel, through a dangerous navigation, the man who destroys my eyesight, knowing the duty incumbent on me, is accountable for all the consequences that will follow; and it does not vary the case whether that act is done by me or another man. Whoever in that case puts out my eyes, commits no sin for not navigating the vessel, for he knows nothing of navigation. His sin consists in destroying the power to navigate the vessel, and incurring the evils of shipwreck; and the same will be my sin for the same reason, and no other; for after my eyes are out, I am no more able to do it than he is.

The Divine government is not so weak, capricious, or improvident, as to involve itself in the necessity of losing its dignity, or exacting impossibilities. The sinner who may in any manner destroy his own means or faculties of doing his duty in future is, no doubt, guilty of a great crime, but his crime is the same as would be the crime of another man, who had done

that work for him, under equal advantages of knowing the consequences.

As the performance of an act, without intention, is no virtue, being merely the operation of machinery, so the omission of an act is no crime where there is no correspondent intention, and, above all, where there is no capacity, even if there were intention; otherwise a mountain might be blamed for not performing the duties of a rational being.

As for a man who shall destroy irrevocably his own faculties to do a duty, human laws will decree such amercement as may be within the scope of their policy, and the Divine government, which alone weighs actions in all their relations and consequences, will inflict such punishment as infinite goodness shall approve. But neither Divine nor human laws will regard this man in the same light they do another man, who, with full powers, and faculties unimpaired, intentionally refuses, from day to day, to do his duty. Since the one who has disqualified himself, and destroyed his own powers, may, perhaps, the next hour after this outrage committed on himself, most deeply repent of his conduct, and regret what he has done; and this repentance, though surely it cannot shield him from the legal consequences, yet will not fail to place his character in a very different light, before any tribunal, from that of the wilful, determined aggressor, and under an economy of grace might procure his pardon: but were there no grace—if eternal and inflexible justice governed all worlds—still these two characters must appear widely different.

But all this, reader, is hypothetical reasoning of the highest class. God has taken care, in the formation of rational immortal intelligences, that their general capacity for duty and obedience shall not rest on such frail, baseless foundations, as to perish with the first acts of disobedience. Never was a more absurd or dangerous opinion advanced, than that every rebel against God completely and for ever incapacitates himself to do his duty, either by destroying his understanding, or by any other means.

On this subject, I beg leave to draw the reader's attention to the opinions of two most eminent and learned men; and, by the by, from the same source he may also see, with how much

want of candour, or of knowledge, many rashly reject the distinction between natural and moral inability as a new notion started in New England.

"Moral incapacity," says Dr. Howe, (Blessedness of the Righteous, p. 231,) "is also in some sense truly natural, that is, in the same sense wherein we are said to be children of wrath, by nature; therefore, human nature must be said to be created by God, and as propagated by man. In the former sense, as God is the author of it, it is taken in this distinction of natural and moral impotency; which needs not further explication:—yet you may take this account of it from Dr. Twisse."* The inability of doing what is pleasing and acceptable to God is not an impotence of nature, but of morals; for, by means of original sin, no faculty is wanting to us: and to this effect saith Augustine, "Sin hath taken from no one the faculty of knowing the truth; the power yet remains, by which we can do whatever we will; or, if you please, we say that the natural power of acting, according to their discretion, is given to all men, but not the moral."

It appears from the quotations, that the distinction of moral inability or impotency, was thought of before the days of Hopkins, and was taught even by Dr. Twisse, who, perhaps, the reader may not know, till he is informed, was Prolocutor to our famous Assembly of divines, and was, perhaps, the most distinguished man in that Assembly. And as for Augustine, he is the man above all others, who, among the ancient fathers of the church, the triangular men pretend to claim. But enough of this.

Neither is the question, whether a total extinction of the knowledge of duty would totally cancel all obligation, much less hypothetical than the former. We do not know that such a case, or that such a class of men, possessing the use of their reason and faculties, ever existed in the world. We know,

* Impotentia faciendi, quod Deo gratum est et acceptum, non est impotentia naturæ, sed morum. Nulla etenim nobis deest facultas natura per peccatum originale; juxta illud Augustina; Nulli agnoscendi veritatis abstulit facultatem. Vind. L. Sect. 6. Naturalem potentiam quidlibet agendi pro arbitrio ipsorum dicimus adomnes transmitti, non autem potentiam moralem

from the light of sacred history, that the ancient heathen nations were extremely ignorant of God and the true religion: we also know, that, speaking of them, the apostle Paul declares, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent." By this mode of expression we are given to understand, that God beheld the failings, superstitions, and corruptions of their worship, with an eye less scrutinizing and severe, from the consideration of their very great ignorance.

In considering this point, however, two important cautions are necessary. *First*, that we do not overrate the ignorance of the heathen, as to its extent, and, *Secondly*, that we distinguish between that part of it which is wilful, and that which is necessary or unavoidable.

Many heathen nations have in all ages been very ignorant. But the Lord saith not as man saith; and merely their want of language, arts, and manners, deprives him not of the proper criterion of judging their hearts. St. Paul does not allow that the heathen are excluded from all possible means of knowing the true God: since the works of nature declare the invisible power and Godhead; and those who have not the law, are a law to themselves, their consciences, in the mean time, accusing or excusing them, so, as he expressly asserts, that they are without excuse, for not loving and obeying God, according to the light they have.

I wish not to express too much confidence with regard to the state of the heathen, since the spirit of truth has not been pleased to speak largely and particularly of their state; but one thing is certain, the great contempt in which their morals and characters are held, by christian nations, generally flows from prejudice, partiality, and unfair comparisons. Among the lower classes of people in all great cities on the globe, nearly the same vices prevail, and notwithstanding the difference of laws and regulations, it is melancholy to reflect how little advantage those called christian, hold over others in point of morality. And it is still more remarkable, that in the interior regions of the great nations of Asia and Africa—in the huts and cabins of the shepherd, tradesman, and farmer, where they are suffi-

ciently distant from the corrupting influence of cities, armies, wars, and revolutions, if there be less of positive virtue, there is less surely of vice. There is nothing to compare with that immense, enormous front of moral depravity, which lifts its head above the mass of the people, and like a dreadful tyrant of unlimited prerogative, sways its black, and filthy sceptre; which thunders in blasphemous profanity; winds its serpentine course through a labyrinth of dishonesty—spurns all religion, although, perhaps, professing the christian.

Noah and his sons taught the true religion, and from this and subsequent sources it is owing that all nations admit the being of God, a superintending providence, and a future state of rewards and punishments. Beside what might descend from these very ancient sources, there is another mode by which heathen nations may receive Divine instruction. The light of reason and conscience, furnished with ample instructions from the volume of nature, is bestowed on every human mind.—These lights, indeed, without any previous knowledge, and under the strong influence of native depravity, might never enable the human mind to discover the being and perfections of God. But when once that grand idea is awakened; when once a reasonable creature is informed there is a God, the creator of all things—that the soul is immortal—that there is another and far more important state of being than this life, it can never be forgotten; and I scarcely need add, that the appearance of the visible world, the grand and glorious revolutions of the heavenly bodies, the regular change of seasons, all the laws of the animal, vegetable, and material kingdoms, serve eminently to invigorate, enforce, and illustrate these great truths.

The ignorance of the heathen is truly deplorable, even that part of it which is inevitable, and wholly beyond his power to remove. But there is another part of his ignorance, which is wilful, and far more strongly connected with his guilt and danger. If the improvement of a privilege be not certainly connected with its increase, and with other privileges, its misimprovement and abuse will generally be connected with its loss, and certainly with guilt in proportion to its magnitude.

There is nothing impossible in the supposition that a heathen

may look abroad upon the immense universe and say, "There is a God, and I am his creature. Such being his kingdom, how glorious and excellent must he be?" Who can certainly say what would be the happy consequence if a heathen should follow the best light he has? Should indeed obey *the law that is within* him? Should follow such light as the Father of lights afforded? Is there a certainty that no ray from the Sun of righteousness would ever reach him? The almighty Ruler of all worlds, in whose hand are the destinies of all creatures, pays little regard to those dark notions of order and consistency by which our feeble minds would seem sometimes to affect to fetter his operations. He certainly regards his own laws, but we certainly do not comprehend the extent of their operations.

In every page of the sacred volume, the guilt of sinners is predicated upon the violation of the light, and abuse of the advantages they have. Of course, the guilt of different nations is represented as being vastly different; yet all as guilty, because all have certain advantages. All have, at least, one certain advantage: They dwell in God's kingdom; they live, and move, and have their being in God: He is not very far from every one of them. Since all power in heaven and earth is given to Christ; since there is subjected to him not only the present world, but that which is to come, these benighted heathen dwell under his government, and he will be their final judge. And as God has given him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, it cannot be doubted that were the light of the gospel to reach the heathen, or any heathen nation, they might become the subjects of the Redeemer's grace.

But who shall presume to limit the sphere enlightened by the beams of the Sun of righteousness? Is he not "*the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world?*" This light, as propagated by different means, and in various ways, shines with unequal degrees of strength and steadiness: but who that knows the power and providence, the grace and mercy of God, can assuredly say that an offer of salvation does not reach every sinner? Who can be assured that, at the day of judgment, every condemned sinner will not be made clearly to see, that

his condemnation, so far from arising from the inevitable thraldom of his nature, from which no relief had ever been brought within his reach, from a depravity of his understanding, which rendered his exclusion from life certain, whether he would or not, arose from his wilful blindness, his perverseness, and abuse of such privileges as he had been favoured with.

The condemnation of those who perish under the light of the gospel, will certainly issue upon the charge of their rejecting salvation; and as a propitiation is certainly made for the sins of the whole world, (1 John ii. 2.) I must leave the reader to fix in his own mind the import of the declaration, John i. 9. "*That was the true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world,*" observing that, in the very next verse, the import of the term would is unequivocally established; for he observes, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him."

Our Saviour declares, that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Nineveh, of Tyre, and Sidon, shall be found less guilty, and shall be less severely punished, in the day of judgment, than those people who heard him preach, and enjoyed, and rejected, the light of the gospel, because their privileges were less. Yet the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Nineveh, of Tyre, and Sidon, and of all those countries, probably had much greater advantages than we readily imagine; and, indeed, the advantages of all heathen, in all situations whatever, are somewhat greater than many are willing to admit, and are such as will subject them to the charge of wilful blindness. Let us hear, on this subject, the reasonings of St. Paul, Rom. i. 18. "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them;* FOR GOD HATH SHOWED IT UNTO THEM. *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*"

This declaration amounts to this, that God is angry at the wickedness of the heathen, because he has given them sufficient light to know their general duty and obligations; "*Because,*" says he, "*that which may be known of God is manifest in them,*

for God hath showed it unto them." And he explains in what way; for he says, "*The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*"

But he proceeds: "*Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, their foolish heart being darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image,*" &c. After many observations upon their obstinacy and wilful blindness, he comes at length to say, "*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*"

Having stated the enormous wickedness to which they proceed, he finally concludes with this extraordinary remark: "*Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*"

In the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul further remarks, "*For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.*"—V. 13, 14, 15. He applies this reasoning in the 26th verse: "*Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? and judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?*"

It is rare, that ignorance, with a direct and obvious allusion to the intellect, is charged upon the heathen, without, at the same time, putting it to the account of wilful blindness, or a voluntary withdraw of the attention from the objects of religion. The famous passage, Ephes. iv. 18. "*Having our understanding darkened,*" &c. will appear in this light by considering its connexion, v. 17. "*This I say, therefore, and testify in the*

Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind: (v. 18.) *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.*"

The ignorance, or darkness of understanding, here mentioned is expressly ascribed to blindness of heart as its cause: "*because of blindness of heart.*" As I would presume, there can be but one opinion concerning the meaning of blindness of heart, this passage places the ignorance, here ascribed to wicked men, as we considered it in the former part of this essay, as among the consequences of sin, but probably adventitious to its nature.

The heart is the seat of affection, of love and hatred, of sin and holiness: blindness of heart is that disaffection, or sinful regard, with which the sinner contemplates the Divine character, and the great objects of religion. In this sense, the sinful heart is totally blind to the beauty of God, the loveliness of Christ, the glory of heaven, and all the excellence of divine things. Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" This construction of this text is confirmed by the leading phrase, "*For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit:*" there is the defect; he *receiveth* not, i. e. he rejects them in his heart, he hates them, because they are foolishness unto him. In this sense, also, the word *knowledge*, or the phrase *to know*, is often used in the word of God, when, should it be applied to the intellect, or understanding strictly, the bible would be cut in pieces, and be no better than a book of riddles, or, rather, of palpable contradictions. The phrase *to know God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal*, refers not to the knowledge of the understanding, but of the heart; for we have just above heard the word of God declare, that the wicked do *know God, and glorify him not as God:* that *they know their master's will and do it not:* that *they know the judgment of God, and that they which do such things are worthy of death*, &c. in short, that *that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them; so that they are without excuse*, for their disobedience.

If by this notion of the enlightening influence of the divine spirit, it is to be understood that any thing is revealed to the sinner which is not revealed in the Bible, if new truth be communicated, if truth be communicated in a new form, so as to make different impressions on the mind, then the Bible is not the true revelation of God; but, on the contrary, the absurd notions of some of the most odious fanatics which ever infested and corrupted the church are justified, and all confidence is withdrawn from the standard of eternal truth. But if it be urged, that these enlightening influences merely aid the sinner's understanding, so as to enable him to understand the truth, to this it is replied, the understanding needs no such aid, and the idea is both unreasonable and unscriptural. Truth cannot be presented plainer than it is in the word of God; and the difficulty of receiving it does not lie in the intellect or understanding: Their most favourite passage confirms this idea, "*For the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit.*" They are foolishness to his heart; as the fool hath said in his *heart*, there is no God. They are alone discerned by the spiritual mind, which may be understood, in one moment, by contrasting it with the carnal mind, which is declared to be enmity with God. Now, if the carnal mind is enmity with God, then surely the spiritual mind is love to God.

I desire the reader to observe, that the terms *carnal* and *spiritual* are generally contrasted in the New Testament. "*But the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.*" What, then, is the spiritual mind? It is love to God. It is subject to his law, and cannot be otherwise; i. e. loves God with all the heart. Again; "*to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace.*" But if the carnal mind is enmity against God, and to be carnally minded is death, then we hear the apostle say, that enmity against God is death; that is, not natural death surely, but spiritual death; and when we hear the scripture speak of the sinner as dead in trespasses and in sins, we at once understand, that to be dead in trespasses and in sins is to be in a state of enmity to God. But if enmity to God is spiritual death, then what is love to God? It is spiritual life. For if the carnal mind

be enmity against God, and if to be carnally minded is death, it is but to take the predicate of these two propositions, and make a new equation out of them, if I may so speak, and by the axiom that any two things, which are equal to a third, are equal to one another, the unknown quantity is exterminated, or spiritual death explained. Enmity to God, and death, are both predicated of, and made equal to, carnal mindedness; consequently death, or spiritual death, is enmity against God. But as the spiritual mind is contrasted with the carnal mind, or enmity to God, then, by an irresistable deduction, love to God, or spiritual life, must be predicated of the spiritual mind. And do we not hear the apostle say, "*to be spiritually minded is life and peace?*"

The divine illumination for which they contend, and the spiritual things about which they talk, relate to the heart and affections, and have no concern with any conceivable depravity of intellect, by which sinners cannot duly apprehend truth, whenever presented with its proper evidence. The human understanding has three modes of apprehending truth. The first is by intuition. Some truths, from their very nature, are so clear and forcible, that the mind immediately perceives them, without reasoning or effort: such as that the whole must be greater than a part. The second is by deduction, and is only different from the first, in that it embraces several steps, or links; for although the mind may not see intuitively the connexion of the two extremes of a long argument, yet it proceeds intuitively from step to step, and feels an equal assurance that the final conclusion rests on the certainty of intuition. The third is the receiving of truth, or facts, upon proper evidence.

But it is truly affecting to see how every province of truth is invaded and overrun by errors of every description. Some, like an army of Saracens, sweeping away every barrier, and deforming alike the beauties of nature, and the glorious temple of religion itself: others, like the frogs of Egypt, croaking with equal horrors in the palace or the cottage; and others, like the locusts, darkening the sun and the air, and devouring every green thing. Here we see men standing high in the public confidence, declaring from the sacred desk, that all religious truths are hidden

from men's understandings ; that men can understand syllogisms, mathematical and natural truths, but the moment they turn their eyes towards the doctrines of religion, all is mystery—they understand nothing.

There is nothing in the word of God to justify this opinion ; for, as I have already observed, the passages which they allege in vindication of it, relate wholly to the depravity of the heart, and to that ignorance, which blindness of heart occasions, and which the Scriptures constantly, and with great plainness, show to be a wilful blindness.

The consequences arising from their scheme, if once fully established, are such as cannot be contemplated but with alarm and horror by those who have a proper regard for the salvation of sinners ; and with indignation and contempt by the irreligious. If men are truly condemned for Adam's sin, without any consideration of their own conduct; if an atonement is made but for a part of mankind, and yet, those for whom no atonement is made are required to believe, and condemned and punished for unbelief ; if, exclusive of the heart and affections, men are so truly depraved in their understandings, in relation to religious truth and doctrine, that the whole Bible is a sealed book, of which they can have no competent understanding, and yet they are required to understand that for which they have no capacity, are inculpated with the heaviest censures and most terrible threatenings, for an impotency of nature, born with them ; if faith be made the grand constituent of all religion, and yet never so fully explained as to convey any definite idea of its nature, further than that it consists in a strong persuasion that Christ has died for me, and is about to save me, that he has paid a debt which I owe to Divine Justice, and made, thereby, my discharge from punishment a matter of legal demand ; that the infinitely perfect righteousness of his active obedience and character are made over to me by contract, so that prior to any consideration of my repentance or personal holiness, I am necessarily pardoned, and eternally justified; that in the gospel plan there is no intermediate idea, between atonement, pardon, imputed righteousness, and eternal justification ; and, of course, that the christian's sanctification is an infe-

rior consideration, wholly out of the chain, and that love to God makes no part of the religion of the gospel, strictly speaking, although it be admitted that there is such an affection in the christian as love,* and such another affection as selfishness; if personal holiness be kept wholly out of sight, or so feebly or mystically explained, that the hearer will form no conception of its usefulness or importance; in short, if a perpetual strain of Divine promises, dealt out with no discrimination of character, and calculated to foster the deepest pride and most odious hypocrisy; if all these combined causes of ignorance, error and stupidity, will, in due time, produce astonishing effects, in this city, such effects may be looked for—indeed, are already partially produced.

If this strain of doctrine shall maintain its ground, and prevail in this city, it will soon become the most corrupt, abandoned, and profligate city on earth. These doctrines are themselves the floodgates of corruption. When religion sets a man loose from his obligations, what further restraint is to be expected? Religion was sent in aid of the voice of conscience. She kindled up her heavenly light, not to extinguish, but to pour new strength and brilliance into the lamp of reason: and that is not religion which makes war with every dictate of reason, justice, and common sense, and wraps itself from the eyes of men in glooms of obscurity and mists of darkness.

But if this scheme prevails in this city; if the plans and projects of the men by whom it is taught and abetted, are crowned with success; if they shall succeed in bearing down all before them, and bringing the people into their views, the great body of their hearers will soon become infidels in sentiment; their minds, wearied with a constant strain of absurdities and contradictions, will soon learn to identify religion with every thing unreasonable and contemptible. Their churches will be false

* Dr. M'Leod, Serm. 9, p. 369, says, "It is easy to show that personal religion includes the exercise of love to God and man." But I aver, that any reader, even with an eagle's eye, who shall read what he makes of it in the run of ten pages, will be convinced that it was no easy matter for him to show it: and, to be sure, such another whirl of chaotic atoms, as he there puts in motion, I never before saw.

and hollow as their doctrines. The pains they are taking to weed out all moral notions, nay, Divine love itself, which is the soul of all religion, as it is the nature of God, will instruct them, when it is too late, that christian ministers are but unprofitably employed in promoting selfishness, ignorance, and prejudice. But I leave them in the hands of him who is able to maintain the cause of truth; and who sometimes suffers errror to triumph as a punishment to the wicked.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. II.

THE GOOD PRESBYTERIAN.

(Concluded from the Fourth Series.)

Part II.

"O fortunati quorum, jam mœnia surgunt!"

Preaching plain Scripture, without tedious reasonings, or dry and deceptive metaphysics, and preaching in such a manner as to give no offence to the proud, the ignorant, the hypocritical, the fastidious, the vicious, and the dull, form two grand qualifications of the good Presbyterian.

The good Presbyterian makes a conspicuous figure in the ecclesiastical courts.

In this grand article, I suspect that this class of men are perhaps surpassing all example of improvement. I have, with my own eyes, witnessed sudden attainments which almost reconciled me to the astonishing history of the admirable Crichton. New England, as much as she boasts of her theological improvements, must acknowledge that she is far surpassed in this article—in this high and exalted kind of ecclesiastical excellence.

If the venerable Findley or Davies could now come upon earth, they would be astonished at the magnitude and splendour of the improvements already made, and now making. Methinks I can almost hear what they would say, on such an occasion; they would exclaim, "Happy age! to be distinguished by such greatness! Happy people! born to such transcendent felicity! Happy country! formed for the theatre of such remarkable displays of wisdom! such varied excellences and generally to be ascribed to the good presbyterian, as every year unfolds itself in our ecclesiastical courts, is sufficient to challenge the admiration of the present generation, and I cannot but think, would be a useful lesson to the gentlemen of the law employed on our illustrious bench of civil justice; and, perhaps, also to our most distinguished civilians of every description.

Although brief, I shall be somewhat particular and elementary in this discussion; and would cheerfully submit it to the Mansfield of our civil courts* to say, whether ecclesiastical jurisprudence in our country is not rising to a respectable and splendid rank.

1. On the convening of a spiritual court, you find yourself in a new atmosphere of peculiar influence, powers, and density. I hardly know what to call it, or to which of the departments of nature or science to turn, to aid my illustration. Perhaps the effects of some of the ærated gasses, in consequence of inspiration, might resemble it. You perceive a sharpness of intellect, an intensity of attention, an acuteness of eye, an agitation of muscular lines, varied and introverted circles of light and motion, thought and sentiment, and flashes of import cross and waver on the countenance. There seems at first nothing like amalgamation in the general mass. Every thing is stern, severe, biting, distant, alone, averse, opposite. But you are happy soon to perceive that all this is but a conscious thrill of the feelings of independent and inflexible justice. You are to consider that the only Law Book of this court is astonishingly concise—comprised, as I have said, in a few duodecimo pages. There is no Blackstone, Bacon, Coke, or even Burn's

* Judge K—.

Justice, to help along. There are few words of precedents, opinions, or decisions, to consult: yet every step is taken, every act is done by law or precedent—not a speech is made without the ample and imposing dress of parliamentary discussion.

The technical phrases of legislatures and courts of justice, of lawyers and congress orators, are necessary, and at all events must be had, or the cause is injured, the dignity of the court impaired, and the speaker sunk down to nothing. No wonder, then, at this thrill of anxiety, this oppressive load of care, at the opening of a session, when the full tale of bricks are to be made, and no straw afforded, nor even stubble to be gathered, but from the headlands, balks, and corners of distant fields, and scanty harvests. And many of the court, not having the advantake of Puffendorff, Montesquieu, or Vattel, are even uncertain of the *Jus Naturale, Morale, et Civile*, of every case. All these evils are suddenly remedied in a manner truly astonishing; for,

First, The courtly air of every thing in this new region, this laboratory of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, is such, that numbers begin, without knowing it, to breathe the air and spirit of law. As was said, in another case, and with variant import, they, in one moment, have a new heart, become other men, and have new powers of intuition, and new modes of communication. You shall see one rise, and with the most perfect parliamentary air, such as would appear in Wilberforce or Canning, call for "the order of the day," although, three hours before this transformation, he would certainly not have known what that phrase meant. Another will arrest a debate and insist on "the previous question," perhaps never, till the inspiration of that propitious moment, knowing the technical import of that phrase. Another, with singular adroitness, shall rise to move that a committee be appointed to report a resolution, to overturn a cause, to change or new model the form of a minute to be entered on record.

With astonishing expertness they acquire the style of a deliberative legislative assembly, over which is completely superinduced the technical phrases of courts of law. To say nothing

of the convenience of this learned language, I may remark how very necessary it is, in a judicatory, which, in fact, holds plenary powers, both legislative, judicial and executive. But,

Secondly, It is not to be understood that every member in this court, can suddenly rise to this great attainment. Many heavy, plodding men, of mere plain common sense, have the infelicity never to be able to acquire this skill. They must jog on as they can, but they never can hope to arrive at eminence, or place their feet on the shoulders of others; of course, they can neither shove those above them, nor rise from the dead level of the base of the pyramid—can never become good presbyterians.

I have often heard it remarked, that a man who means to acquire influence, must be active in the judicatories of the church; and this notion seems to be the main spring of action. The skill of which I am speaking, is the grand desideratum. There is one art, it is said, in which some men never can acquire skill.* Enough, however, can acquire this juridical skill, to give tone to the system, to take a decided preëminence, and to inspire a much larger number with emulation.

Parliamentary business has one dialect, courts of justice another, theologians a third; common, civil, statute, and canon laws, have distinct phrases, and separate courts; but in the court before us, they all unite the spirit of their maxims, and the concentrated and rectified science of their language. But it is the superlative felicity of a few men, a few, very few rare spirits, to exhibit perfect models here. I have them this moment in my eye;

"Eloquar, an sileam?"

Where not the admiration of men a principle of absolute levity, they carry enough of it about them, to crush Hercules, Sampson, or Atlas. But light as it is, I fear to load them with more; I shall therefore be silent.

But though I must not speak names, I surely may give some lines, perhaps filled with a little mezzotinto, in doing which I shall feel an inward satisfaction, and, perhaps, give to some a de-

* Freemasonry.

gree of the same sort of pleasure, while I discharge a debt of justice.

I fancy some oracle of ecclesiastical jurisprudence rising slowly from his seat. Ah! 'tis he—it is the venerable Dr. Slambangus! While he lays back his forestop, and raises and waves his hand, to put the *humeri extensores* in tune for harmonious action; while the ophthalmic muscles, with awful convergence, point the visual ray level, beneath a superciliary nexus of majesty and thought, as when the sun from the eastern horizon shows half its orb beneath a line of darkness, an attention spreads that would almost render thoughts audible, and give an echo to silence itself. He speaks!

"Mr. Moderator,

"When I consider the dignity of the chair you fill, which dignity it derives from the dignity of HIM who fills it, who is promoted by the dignitaries of the church, to be the chief dignitary of all the dignitaries of this ECCLESIASTICAL COURT, I feel myself dignified, while I dignify you, Sir, who are dignified by those whom all men dignify. Sir, I rise to move you, that there be a commission instituted, and a committee appointed, to prepare and report a bill, to this house, relative to the regulation of forms of business, the arrangement of precedents, and the revision and enlargement of law phrases: the object of which is to lay a broader foundation for juridical science. And furthermore, Sir, if this motion shall prevail, and be carried into effect, I have it in contemplation to introduce another motion, which I move may be the order of the day for next Monday, the object of which shall be to establish a seminary of ecclesiastical or canon law, in which there shall be three professorships: the first, to form into a body of reports the decisions of all judicatories, drawn from their records and judgment rolls; the *second*, from these reports, and from our *standards*, to form regular digests, pandects, or *codices legum ecclesiasticorum;* the *third*, to arrange and complete a Lexicon of legal terms and phrases, to be entitled, *Lexicon verborum theologiorum ecclesiasticorumque:* and furthermore, that, provided this motion shall prevail, to move for the order of the day on Tuesday, that the theological course of every candi-

date for licensure shall be completed by four years instruction, under these professors, which I presume every one will perceive to be of vital importance to the ministerial character."

Though I have stated the above motions merely as possible specimens of court deliberation, yet, the reader will readily perceive that there is far more than mere imagination in all this. How grand would be the era, when professors, fellowships, and colleges of ecclesiastical law, shall be established. These canon laws would, probably, soon derive a concurrent jurisdiction with all other laws of the country. We shall not then see such bungling, as we now often see with blushes, or with regret. Our young divines will come forth skilful and accomplished lawyers, and our ecclesiastical judicatories will open a wide and splendid field of parliamentary eloquence and talents. But,

2. The good presbyterian will never fail, in all the revolutions of court business, in all debates, appointments, elections, influences, manœuvres, *ruses de guerres*, *coup de mains*, forlorn hopes, and extremities of court management, I will not say intrigue, to maintain firmly, magnanimously, gloriously, nay, furiously, and desperately, the power and prerogative of the clergy. And what can be more just, more excellent, more necessary? Who ought to have power but men possessed of holiness? Are they not born to rule? And where is the authority so well coupled as with wisdom and justice? Are they not formed and fitted to govern? Behold their gravity, their meekness, their candour, their wisdom, their tender regard for the welfare of all below them, their magnanimous mercy, and disinterested benevolence!

A congregation may have an anxious desire to settle a certain minister; but a body of clergymen may know better than to gratify that desire. An infant will sometimes cry, and be very petulent, because, a careful and tender nurse keeps its fingers out of the candle. It is often so with congregations of people; their wishes are nothing; and what do they know? It is for their good to be always subject to the high and infallible decision of every ecclesiastical court, "IN ALL CASES WHATSOEVER"—a boon, though denied the King of Great Britain, can-

not be denied a reverend clergyman. A majority is nothing in the eye of the law; since it is well known that the minority is often on the right side of the question.

3. In the ecclesiastical courts, the good presbyterian is known by his inviolable adherence to forms. And this, in the present state of business, is a most difficult affair to manage, and will so remain till legal professorships are instituted. Where the standard prescribes no form, and where no direct order of a higher judicatory can be adduced that will touch the case, I have sometimes seen the strongest indications of a brown study on so many countenances. In these distressing cases, some master-spirit always affords relief, by recollecting a precedent.

The ancient advocates of the doctrine of substantial forms, used to say, "If it is important that a thing should be done, it is equally so, that it should be done in some manner—that it should have some form." Is there not reason in that argument? Can a hat exist without the form of a hat? Forms are as essential as things, and I suspect that the doctrine of substantial forms will soon be revived. Why should we spurn and disparage the old philosophers, and extol and revere the old divines? It is absurd, and there is, no doubt, as much merit in certain respects, in the one class as the other.

Such glorious displays of invincible, inviolable attachment to forms as I have seen! Reader, it would do your heart good, to see the like; it would, I aver, exalt your opinion of human nature. The principle of uniformity is one of the grandest of all nature's harmonies. When a thing is once done, it should *always be done in the same manner*, and then people may know how to do it. No possible improvement can countervail the beauty and uniformity of sameness. The man that sticks to this principle, in the judicatories of the church, cannot but rise to greatness; and I, in fact, know some men who are toiling and climbing to the high and distant eminence of the double D, by dint of nothing else. Men, whose minds are naturally dull, flat, insipid, and inelastic as a piece of slate, by constantly and strenuously pressing formality of proceeding, become, at length, highly distinguished, in the spiritual court:—Moderator of a Sy-

nod—Moderator of the General Assembly—Doctor—Professor —any thing—every thing—

> "His countenance like
> The morning star, that guides the starry flock,
> Allur'd them, and drew after him a third
> Part of heaven's host."

Nothing makes a man appear so great, so reverend, so wise. He becomes, at once, a sacred diplomatist—a he-goat of the flock; though these terms may not seem to agree. He is skilful; he is ready; he is every where the *fac totum*. "*Quod dicendum—dicit—faciendum—facit.*" Common sense, when set in competition to *form*, appears foolishness; reason no better than madness, and all the rules of expediency, like David's servants, under the shears of Hanun, king of Moab, glad to keep out of court till their beards are grown, or, at any rate, till they can get longer garments.

4. The last thing I shall mention is the wonderful faculty of some great leaders to vindicate all their doctrines, all their opinions, all the rules, proceedings, forms, decisions, and decrees of ecclesiastical courts, by their standard, consisting of a few duodecimo pages; and this is done with perfect promptitude and convincing perspicuity. There must be a ductility in the standard which surpasses all example. I do not say that every man, or even every man of talents can do this: it is the rare felicity of a few men whose genius must be as plastic as the law book itself. A small piece of gold, says Lewenhoeck, will gild a wire that will reach round the globe; but these moral ductilities seem, for aught I can perceive, to be absolutely infinite. But to arrive at this happy talent, the ecclesiastical civilian must explore the standard with the eyes of Archimedes, many times, before he shall be able to pronounce the joyful "Eurisko, Eurisko."

Before I close on this article, I would barely suggest, whether it would not be better to have the bible used in a more restricted manner. It is an exceedingly sacred book, and very liable to perversion. If every man be allowed to read it for himself, and be his own expositor, there will certainly be a diversity of opinions both in doctrine and discipline; and many people will be continually differing from the standard. All ex-

perience demonstrates this fact, that where people make a free use of the bible, without a living oracle at hand, though doubtless a very plain book, they will differ concerning its import. Perhaps, indeed, this difference was first set on foot by some of those living oracles, in earlier times, when living and breathing oracles were not as pure and honest as they are now, or, at least, did not understand the bible as well as they do now, when they have no motive to mislead the minds of mankind.

The question, however, is, whether it would not be better to put the standard into the hands of the people, which is a concise and clear statement of the great points of doctrine and discipline, and let it be the business of their teachers to show them its exact congruity to the sacred scriptures; for so sure as they set themselves about that business, they will often make very wild work of it.

I have been put into this train of thoughts by several indications which appear to look that way. I have, in the first place, noticed, and especially since the science of ecclesiastical jurisprudence has made such progress, that the great leaders in that career never make any reference to the word of God in our ecclesiastical courts; they appeal directly to the standard as the grand and only law book, or to the paramount authority of precedents founded on that standard. There are, indeed, some blunt, bungling, and old-fashioned men, who will sometimes quote the scriptures, and urge a passage from the bible, in some disputable case or question. But they are generally laughed at, or frowned upon, as totally wanting all skill and sense of propriety; or, perhaps, are pitied for their ignorance, ill-timid observations, and rawness in such matters.*

In a few rare instances, I have known some of these uncourtly blunderers to insinuate, that a certain passage in scripture rather militiated against the standard, and in that case they never failed to draw down upon themselves heavy censures, and strong indignation.

* At a late meeting of the Young Men's Missionary Society, during the trial of Mr. C—, a motion was made to exclude scripture proofs, as impreper.

In the next place, I have observed, that these true and thorough ecclesiastical lawyers do not promote the reading and discussion of the scriptures among their people. Such an inclination appearing among their people would excite alarm and surprise, as I have before remarked, and would not fail to meet with serious opposition. I do not hesitate to declare, that if such a propensity should manifest itself in any of the congregations of these triangular preachers, in this city, it would not fail to excite great alarm, and would immediately be suppressed and put down. "What," they would say, "these people are about to become wiser than their teachers!" They endeavour, indeed, to get their people together to pray and sing psalms: but——not for discussions! And I call upon the people of this city to witness, that no meetings or associations for rational inquiry into religious subjects, grounded on the scriptures, is ever set on foot or encouraged here.*

It would make people speculative—would result in disputes, mataphysics—perhaps divisions and heresies. They had better let the bible alone, and leave it for their great masters to explain to them that awfully mysterious book, in such time, place, and manner, as they please.

Dr. M'Leod remarks, (Sermon 6, p. 232.) that in well-regulated churches, where piety is cultivated by the pure preaching of evangelical truth, the ordinary means of growth are the noiseless conversion of the children of Zion, that is, *in their infancy*. This seems to be a grand discovery, but, at the same time, implies a concession, that the world has never yet seen a well-regulated church. The plan of regulations the Doctor has in mind I presume would complete the good presbyterian, and be a great benefit to the world. The Doctor informs us (p. 231.) "That the promise of God *secures* the salvation of the offspring of believers dying in infancy." If this be true, on account of the bad regulation of churches, it would seem to be the duty of all

* Bible Classes are formed, among the young people in several congregations in this city, and their object is highly laudable, but essentially different from the one above mentioned. In these classes, the priest is the oracle; and the knowledge which comes over, is from an alembic, which gives every thing the exact colour and spirit of his opinion. There is nothing like free discussion intended, or accomplished.

Christians to pray that God would take away all their children in infancy; since, according to the best light we can get, growing up to manhood, they more than half of them live and die in impenitence, and are lost. There seems, however, to be some difficulty in this opinion, but here is no place for argumentation; and the great authority of the Doctor seems to forbid it, if there were. Yet, I must observe, holding this great man to his own premises, if such be the condition of all the infant children of believers, that dying in infancy, they would be all saved, it must be because Christ has made atonement for all their sins, which "atonement," the Doctor says, "excludes subsequent punishment, and implies reconciliation:" but, such being their condition in infancy, I trust it will continue to be their condition, though they should attain to the years of Methusaleh. On the contrary, if the child of a believer reaches seventy years, and then dies a sinner, it must be, on the Doctor's plan, because Christ never died for him, and had he died in infancy, he could not have been saved.

But presently the Doctor begins to talk about his children rejecting God's promise of eternal salvation, and says, "they will be saved, unless they reject the promise of eternal life." I only desire to caution him to take care what he says; for does he mean to say, that a promise of eternal life is made to any one for whom Christ did not die? or, when made to one for whom Christ did die, is it ever finally rejected? He is over his line. For myself, I read that the promises of God in Christ, are not yea and nay, but YEA and AMEN. This, however, by the by.

But I am struck with the beauty and harmony of a system. We first see the doctrines of the everlasting gospel preached to the church and to the world, to people of all classes, without giving offence. Even *the offence of the cross has ceased*, and the gospel no longer sends a sword on earth, but peace. Like a gentle anodyne, it creates peace and quiet in every bosom, and soothes every conscience. In the next place, ecclesiastical polity is becoming a grand science, opening scenes well calculated to furbish dormant talents, enkindle glorious ambition, and bring the church on high ground. In the third place, a smoother road to conversion is discovered. The terrible noise made about religious revivals in this country is all mis-

take, or, more properly, a delusion. People generally become religious in infancy. "*This mode of bringing home to the great Shepherd the lambs of his fold, seems to be more congenial with the order of his kingdom, than the sudden incursions which are made into the territory of the god of this world in order to pluck the prey from the mighty, and bring a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. The mode of conversion alluded to, in the latter case, is indeed more remarkable; but this fact indicates that it is somewhat* EXTRAORDINARY."

If, then, in the numerous revivals called religious, since the days of the Reformation, in all parts of Christendom, but now and then an incursion has been made into the kingdom of the god of this world, and if a stranger, plucked with noise and bustle from the mighty, has been an *extraordinary* case, and not congenial to the order of Christ's kingdom, let preachers become a little more bland and soothing to pride and hypocrisy; let the church become a *little better regulated*, and rise to more show and splendor, and these noisy awakenings will cease to trouble and confound her spiritual lords; the church will soon be filled up with noiseless conversions—indeed, will rise in self-importance and self-deception, till her bloated and rotten fabric, together with her infatuated builders, shall sink together in one common ruin.

INVESTIGATOR.

No. III.

In introducing a letter of the celebrated Gilbert Tennant, to his brother, William Tennant, during his ministry in Philadelphia, I trust I shall confer a pleasure upon every evangelical reader; as it furnishes a noble specimen of the vigorous conceptions, and ardent zeal, of a great and pious mind.

I have only to beg, that the tame and temporising spirits of the present day would read it, and see the immense distance they stand from the temper and feelings of the fathers of our church. They may, also, if they please, perceive no less difference in their views of the character of God, as well as the nature and quality of that affection which creatures owe him.

INVESTIGATOR.

If you can make any use of this extract, it is at your service. The publication is in my possession. In a letter to his brother William, after mentioning certain measures, and modes of proceeding, which appeared to him the effects of carnal policy, and coldness or cowardice in the cause of religion, Mr. T. says, "O, my dear brother, the prudence of hypocrites, and many of the *pious* of this generation, though it be highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God; a mere mystery of selfish, sneaking, cowardly iniquity. They get by this a good name amongst the wicked, which they call *character*. But what good do they with it? And what comfort have they in it? For my part, I look on a character so got, and so kept, to be a scandal, and a reproach. Away with the abomination of *carnal cunning!* Let us come out for God, as flames of fire, and say, with gallant Luther, *madness is better than mildness in the cause of God!* Let us imitate dear and noble Zuinglius, who, when mortally wounded in the field of battle, triumphed over his bloody papal enemies, yea, and over death itself, in these ever memorable strains of heroism, *Quidni hoc infortuni?* O primitive simplicity, and divine fortitude, whither are ye fled? Surely all flesh have corrupted their way, and there is none upright among men! Surely, surely, there is no reason to be scared at the precious cross of our dear and venerable Lord Jesus, or to contrive or come into soft methods to please the ungodly, and screen us from the utmost weight of suffering that men or devils can inflict. O, it is honorable, it is ravishing, to suffer for our dearest Lord! It is a small expression of grateful love to our great and good master, in return for his unmerited, immense, condescending love to us; and, therefore, if God so please, let good and bad, men and devils, roar and rage, yea, let the whole creation come against us, with all its fury and force, strip us of every thing naturally dear to mankind, curse us, condemn us, tear us to pieces, or grind us to powder, it is sweet, it is lovely, it is precious. All kinds of suffering, and that in the highest degree that ever were

or can be inflicted by the sons of men, are welcome, dear Lord Jesus Christ, for thee, and infinitely too little in return for thy love. The testimony of our consciences, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, that 'in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world,' is infinitely better and sweeter than the applause of the whole earth. "*Nullâ pallescere culpâ——munus.*" The apostles did more good to mankind, under the greatest reproach and contempt, than *we* do, with all our *fine character.* For our *good name*, among the ungodly and *fleshly* Christians of this adulterous generation, gotten by carnal compliances, is to our reproach. For if we did what we should, and *as* we should, they would fall upon us and beat us for God's sake.——"But I must stop my pen, which, from the fulness of my heart, would write a volume instead of a letter, and return to observe, that the aforesaid heavenly light opened to my view the Divine perfections, both natural and moral, especially the latter, arrayed with such superior, transcendent, and inexpressible charms, as made all the beauty of men and angels, compared therewith, to appear as darkness and deformity. This view of the Divine Excellence, (the grand source and origin of being and good,) considered in the Deity himself, and as expressed in the works of creation, providence, and redemption, inspired my soul with admiration, reverence, humility, and love; and, by its magnetic force, attracted ardent aspirations of heart after God, as my chief good, last end, centre, and pattern. *I was inclined to revere Jehovah, and to love him supremely, merely because of his own intrinsic amiableness, purity, and worth, without any regard to myself at all. I could not but love him if he had never loved me, or shown me any kindness, nor ever would in time to come.* In the mean while, I felt the gentle violence of innumerable, invaluable, and unmerited benefits shed on me in a rich and unwearied profusion, together with personal engagements, and immortal hopes, superadded to the former *disinterested attractives.* All those in conjunction fired my soul, and struck every spring of motion. Then was I inclined afresh to turn my back on all creatures, and embrace the fountain and origin of beauty and bles-

edness, in whom I clearly saw that complete happiness was to be found amidst all the vicissitudes and miseries of the present life, and in him alone; so that if there was no future state of existence at all, no future recompense, sincere piety is its own reward; yea, such a one as all the honours, pleasures, and emoluments, of this world, amassed in the possession of one man, cannot balance or parallel; its sweets are so sublime, rational, satisfactory, and noble."

No. IV.

THOUGHTS ON THEOLOGICAL TRUTH.

While in the following cursory reflections on Truth, it has not been my endeavour to follow the particular outline of any creed or confession of faith, so neither have I taken any great care, by a laboured style and philosophical accuracy of language, to shun the cavils of the captious, the ignorant, the base, and the malicious which are too little the objects of my regard to induce much labour or caution.

With sincerity of heart I have expressed my opinions on these important subjects, aware that they are amenable to a higher judgment than that of man.

I. The book of Revelation and the works of Nature are the fountains of knowledge; from one or the other of these, we derive whatever we know of God, or of his creatures. We are made susceptible of knowledge; can perceive, compare, and judge: which may be termed exercises of reason.

But, in our present state, we are not always able to refer every point of knowledge to its proper *fountain*. With a faculty to perceive, man is placed in the midst of a universe of beings, whose natures, actions, designs, and characters, it is desirable for him to know; but as comparatively few of these objects can come under the inspection of his reason or senses, he depends on information or testimony, and this is termed *revealed* or *natural*, as it comes originally from God or creatures.

II. We are equally ignorant of the nature or essence of matter and mind. We perceive that they differ in all their known properties; that one is capable of thought, memory, love, hatred, &c., that the other is incogitative, and inactive. We thence conclude, that they are entirely different in their nature, and the word of God establishes that distinction. But, as we judge of mind or spiritual beings through the medium of material and sensitive organs, we are liable to err in our opinions or conceptions of them. It was the remark of an ancient philosopher, that matter is the shadow of spirit. We know enough, however, of both, to establish the superior importance and excellence of spiritual natures.

III. "God is an object the most grand and awful that ever engaged the attention of creatures." It is impossible to know how far mankind would have discovered his being and perfections by the light of nature, without the aid of special revelation. But having revealed himself, and made his character and attributes known, in a special way, the light of nature and the reason of the human mind do not contradict, but, in many instances, confirm that revelation.

Neither is the idea of a special revelation of God to creatures, nor are any of the truths revealed, repugnant to the dictates of reason, though some of them are beyond its comprehension. Indeed, reason is on the side of revelation, not only in the aggregate, but in the detail of its doctrines. The Atheist, who shall deny the existence of God, will find his own reason far more embarrassed than the Christian who believes in revelation. The order, harmony, beauty, and magnificence of the universe, favours the idea which God has revealed of his being and attributes. Safely might we rest the merits of the grand question on the comparative reasonableness of the two propositions, viz. whether the material universe is uncreated and eternal, or whether created and governed by God, and that God is eternal?

The universe, as far as we can discover, is what it might be expected to be, under the direction of such a being as God has revealed himself to be; but is what could not possibly be, without the exertion of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, in one design, and by one being.

There is but one God. The supposition of two Gods that were omnipotent, would be absurd. If their power were equal, they might so effectually counteract each other, that nothing could be accomplished, and neither would be omnipotent: but were their power unequal, the weaker surely could not be omnipotent. With such absurdities the heathen polytheism was encumbered. The surrounding starry heavens, the mighty system of planets revolving round the sun, and turning on their axes to receive his beams, all in one direction, and nearly in one great plane, the changing seasons on this globe, the animal and vegetable kingdoms, the wonderful mechanism of man, the whole system of nature, in short, involving systems within systems, with most exquisite connexion, and regular and endless gradations, all manifest unity of design, and perfection of wisdom—all favour the idea that there is but one God, one scheme of providence.

God is a spirit, and omnipresent; but were he a material being, either the material worlds must be a part of God, or else two bodies can occupy the same place, or else he could not be omnipresent. Our own reason and experience approve the doctrine of God's spirituality. We perceive that matter is incapable of perception, thought, or action. When at rest it will never move, but by force *ab extra*; when in motion, it will never stop till it meets resistance. Matter is a being perfectly passive; hence, *vis inertiæ*, or power of inactivity, as it is called, is among its primary qualities. All the phenomena of nature confirm this idea. Spirit, or mind, which I here use as synonymous, is the only agent in the universe. I shall here take no notice of the idle controversy sometimes raised, "How, or whether a spirit can move a material substance?" When we perceive the greatest portions of matter moving in a manner which indicate and demonstrate the most perfect wisdom and unlimited power, we cannot doubt that they are moved by mind. Indeed, when we perceive all creation through her extensive departments, from the revolution of worlds, to the growing of a spire of grass, or the circulation of the fluids of an insect, and in all these infinitely varied and complicated movements,

evincing a uniform and astonishing adaptation of means to ends, we cannot doubt that there is a God, that he is a Spirit, omnipotent and omnipresent.

The object of these remarks is not to prove the being and perfections of God, but to show that what God has revealed of Himself is not repugnant and revolting to our reason.

God is eternal. We are able to perceive that something must have existed from eternity. It may perhaps not be very easy to show why something could not spring up from nothing, and without any cause. Yet we certainly know that it could not; and there is not a more evident truth, than that if there had ever been a time when nothing existed, that nothing would ever have existed. Hence, the world of beings, we perceive, is full proof that some being must have been from eternity. I shall not enter into arguments. Every reader knows in what way the hypothesis of an eternal series of dependent causes is confuted; and every reflecting mind will perceive that such a hypothesis explodes itself. For if you begin at the further end of the chain, if I may so say, and come this way every successive link in the whole chain must be at an infinite distance from us; but if you begin at this end, and run back, then every successive link in the whole chain must be at an assignable distance from us, of course, not infinite. Coming this way, from the further end, they must be all infinitely distant from us; —going the other way, from this end, they must be all at a measurable distance. In a continuous chain, part of the links cannot be at a finite, and the other part at an infinite distance; for if so, what would be the distance of the middlemost?

It is sufficiently clear to human reason, that the eternal, spiritual, omnipotent, omnipresent God, revealed in the scriptures, must have existed from eternity; and have been the creator, upholder, and governor of all worlds, and all creatures. "The Christian who believes this must have far less credulity, and do less violence to his reason," says one, "than the Atheist who denies it." Our strongest conceptions of infinity are doubtless attended with much weakness and obscurity. We arrive at them by considering a number growing without end, or by reflecting on boundless expansion.

God has infinite knowledge. Perhaps our best conception of this is derived from the consideration, that He knows every thing which can be known, or is the proper subject of knowledge. But of the mode or manner of his perception of knowledge, we can form no conception. It comprehends the past, the present, and the future: and with Him there can be neither forgetfulness, recollection, nor discovery of truth, which must include the idea of immutability. It is probable that we derive our notion of time, or duration, from the succession of our ideas:—and of space, from our having but one point of perception. Whether, therefore, time and space, as they appear to us, are not mere relations, which have no foundation but in our feeble and limited faculties, there is just reason to doubt. If God perceive with equal and invariable clearness in every point in universal space, and if with him there be no succession of ideas, "no variableness nor shadow of turning," his views of what we call space and duration will be different from ours.

I hope this hypothetical manner of speaking of that glorious Being will not be supposed to indicate feelings of irreverence. Alas! "He knows we are but dust." However perfect knowledge might change our views of space and duration, one thing is certain, creatures do exist, and events do take place. It is certain the sun is in one place, and the moon in another; and it is equally certain, that the creation was at one time, and the day of judgment will be at another.

God is holy. By this, in general, is intended his moral excellence, goodness, and purity of character. In him is infinite wisdom, justice, goodness, amiableness of character. God is love. In his work of creation, providence, and redemption, he has evinced this character; and will continue so to do, to all eternity.

Those qualities or perfections of the Divine Being, which are proper and necessary to his nature and character, are called attributes; such as, eternity, self-existence, spirituality, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability—which not being supposed to depend on the divine will, are called natural attributes. But on the contrary, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, love, and mercy, as they may be said to depend on the

divine will, are denominated moral attributes. It is an infelicity in our language, that those terms by which we express the moral attributes of God are not definite with regard to each other. Thus, holiness and goodness are terms of wide import, and go more or less into the nature of every moral excellence: mercy is rather an act than an attribute; and truth, which is a term generally used in reference to language, is but the correspondence of a declaration with a fact; or, as Dr. Watts observes, "the proper joining or disjoining of signs."

IV. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."—As this must have allusion to the soul of man, and not his body, we are authorized to believe that man, as a moral and intellectual being, exhibits some likeness of his Creator, and that, farther than what consists merely in holiness: in short, that God is an infinitely great intelligent being, having an understanding and will, and every thing necessary to constitute an almighty, infinitely wise, and holy moral agent. God has knowledge; for the scripture declares, that "he is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." He has love; "For the Lord loveth the righteous." He has approbation and aversion; "For Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." He has anger; for "He is angry with the wicked every day." We are not to understand, however, that he is agitated with the sudden, vain, and fleeting passions of men. "His ways are above our ways."

I leave it for the reader to judge for himself, whether the union of the divine and human natures in Christ favours the idea of an intellectual and moral similarity, or resemblance, between God and man, considered as a holy creature.

V. Motive, means, and end, are, in our idea, inseparable from the conduct of an intelligent agent. There are certain considerations which must induce us to undertake a work; we use a course of means for its accomplishment; we have an end in view: commonly, indeed, we have several ends or purposes to answer, but always a chief end. And it may be observed, that every single act has its motive and end, as well as the aggregate of the labour employed in an undertaking. And in the building of a tower or palace, the owner, the principal

builder or engineer, and the common labourer, may all have different motives and ends; though at last all of them may centre in one great ultimate end.

It is frequently, and, perhaps, not improperly said, that God is self-moved, in his great work. The meaning of this must be, that his own infinite nature and perfections furnish him with the motives of his conduct. Since the motive to do a work must be prior to the consideration of that work, as done, the motives of the Creator must have arisen from something prior to the creation itself. Before a thing exists, the question to be considered is, whether it had better exist or not; in agitating which question, the labour or expense of rearing and supporting it are to be balanced against the benefits which will accrue from it, when made. Whichever way this question may be decided, it will certainly turn and be determined in view of interests and motives extrinsical to the thing in question. When infinite wisdom agitated the question, whether the universe of worlds and creatures should exist, and perceived an end to be answered by it worthy of God, infinite goodness prompted to the exertion of that power by which creation arose into being. Whence it has been thought proper to say, that God, moved by his goodness, created the world for his own glory. Perfect wisdom can give being to nothing, but in view of its final cause, or end, which always looks at something beyond the thing itself. Wherefore, the final cause, or ultimate end of all creatures, comprising God's whole kingdom, must regard something beyond that kingdom, or distinct from it—something worthy of the infinite Jehovah; and that must he his own honour and glory.

VI. Every intelligent agent acts with design. Whatever God does, every exertion of his agency, from the creation of creatures to all eternity, he designed or decreed from all eternity. This is evident from the consideration of his knowledge and immutability. He has perfect, unchangeable knowledge of all things past, present, and to come. All events are decreed. "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose—whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." Every event, connected with his agency, or the subject of his

foreknowledge, must, of necessity, be decreed. To say nothing of Divine agency in events, God's foreknowledge is perfect and infallible. He knows how every event will be, before, as well as after its occurrence. This idea is necessary to the support of his omniscience.

The supposition of God's decrees can, in no degree, endanger the freedom or privileges of his creatures. If God can create and govern in the best manner, he can decree so to do. Let it be supposed that a being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, had created, and was employed in governing, a world of creatures without any previous decree. Superadding the idea, that he had determined to do what is doing, from eternity, in that world, would neither add to, nor take from, the condition of those creatures. What God does, in the universe, is the dictate of infinite wisdom; his decree to do it is but the predetermination of that same wisdom, which eternally pre-existed his acts.

The free actions of creatures are as properly the subjects of a decree, as the falling a tree, or the rising of the sun. This is established by the express testimony of Scripture. Indeed, the decrees of God principally relate to the moral conduct of creatures. I need only say, that innumerable events are declared in the word of God, as decreed, which immediately and wholly concern the free actions of creatures. If God decreed that the city of London should this day be what it is, then he decreed all the steps and causes of its progress to its present state. If he decreed the crucifixion of Christ, then he decreed how, by whom, and for what cause it should be done.

The decrees of God in no degree interfere with the freedom and accountability of creatures. Hence, one moral action is as much the subject of a decree as another.

The distinction set up, between foreknowledge and decrees, is useless and groundless, as relates to this subject; the foreknowledge of God is infallible. But that infallibility must arise from the certainty of the thing foreknown. Now, if a future event is certain, as to the doctrine of liberty, contingency, &c. it may as well be rendered certain by a Divine decree, as by any other influence or

connexion. But what certainty can any future event have but by its connexion with his determination who "worketh all things after the counsels of his own will?"

The decrees of God are infinitely just, wise, and good. Therefore it is that they are carried perfectly into effect. Were the case supposable, or possible, which it is not, that it should now be discovered by the great Ruler, that something he had decreed had better not take place, a change would doubtless be made, notwithstanding the decree, and that thing omitted. The same, however, which infinite Wisdom from all eternity saw best, it now sees best. Let it be our language, "Thy will be done."

VII. The decrees of God are his previous determination to do what he has done, and will do, and may be considered as the plan of creation, providence, and redemption, formed in the eternal and unchanging counsels of God. Of these I shall briefly speak.

CREATION.

For our knowledge of the work of creation we depend wholly on special revelation; and the idea that matter in a chaotic or organic state, long pre-existed the creation, seems to be without foundation in the word of God. If any general inferences can be drawn from the discoveries of geologists, they favour the Mosaic account of the creation; in which it is declared that God created the universe of worlds, and angels, and men, and animals. The time of the creation of angels is not specified in the Mosaic history. Some eminent writers, however, think that they were created but a little before the creation of Adam. But to me, it seems probable, that they must have remainded awhile in their state of innocence and glory, nor is it certain or probable that their seduction of our first parents were among the first acts of their rebellion, or very soon after their fall. The account given of them, favours the supposition that they had great knowledge and experience; nor is there any certain evidence that they had not existed for what we might term thousands of years or ages before the creation of man.

Men and angels were created moral agents, pure and holy, but not immutable. *A moral agent is a being capable of voluntary action.* A voluntary action is what I mean by a *volition*, and by a volition I mean an act of will. No higher conception of freedom of will can be formed than what a man may derive from his own experience, when two objects of choice are set before him. These may be termed his motives; and that object, which, all things considered, presents the greatest good, may be called the ruling motive, and towards that he will incline. Hence, it is said by some, that the *will* will follow the strongest motive; by others, that it always is as the greatest apparent or present good.

It is objected, that the will thus governed by motives, cannot be free. Whoever will point out a constitution of will, embracing more freedom, and better to answer the purpose of a rational being, will deserve the thanks of mankind. No one, I trust, will pretend that the will can act without any motive; there then remains but one of two grounds to be taken. The will must follow either the stronger or weaker motive. A piece of gold and of lead are laid before a man; if he can contrive to make himself prefer the lead to the gold, he must have an extraordinary degree of freedom, and *moral power.*

The reader who would gain light and information on this subject, may consult "Edwards on the Will," a work which did honour not only to Edwards himself, but to the country in which he was born—a work which cannot be answered, nor attentively read without conviction.

VIII. No reason can be offered against the belief that God formed the universe of creatures out of nothing; that is, that they were not made out of any pre-existing material. Nor is there any foundation in Scripture for believing that intelligent creatures are rays, emanations, or parts, of the Deity.

PROVIDENCE.

IX. By the providence of God, we are to understand his power, justice, goodness, and mercy, exerted in preserving and governing his creatures. His providence is infinitely wise, all-power-

ful, constant, universal, and eternal. It is believed by some, that a power equal to that exerted in creating, is constantly necessary for the preservation of whatever is created; of course, that preservation is a kind of constant creation. Our knowledge indeed, is not sufficient to determine whether matter or spirit, when once brought into being, would continue by virtue of its own inherent nature and powers, or whether its annihilation would be the immediate consequence of an entire withdrawment of preserving power. But as we are taught in the scriptures, that every thing in the universe, of beauty, order, consistency or happiness; that all life, both natural and spiritual, depends on the preserving power of God, we are, perhaps, justified in the conclusion, that created existence itself depends for its continuance on preserving power and goodness.

Divine providence is not only general and universal, but particular and constant—extending not only to angels, but to insects—not only to systems of worlds, but to every particle of matter. When we consider that the omnipotent God is every where present, and can exert his power, in all places, we have reason to believe that so great a scheme of providence is no burden to him; and can never, in one instance, for a moment, fail in its operation, whether it be to uphold, to prosper, to reward, or punish.

The operation, with such amazing uniformity, of the unsearchable powers and principles of nature, the great laws of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, the regularity and grandeur of the heavenly motions, all evince the presence and energies of a universal providence. With equal clearness may the same be discerned in the rise and fall of nations, and, in fact, in the various concerns of human life.

Still more interesting and amazing would appear the operations of divine providence in sustaining intellectual and spiritual natures. But those departments lie hidden from human inspection. The greatest angels that stand around his throne are as dependent on his preserving goodness as the insects of a summer day. The constitution of their powers, and the laws of operation pervading their intellectual and moral faculties, are his work.

X. Jesus Christ is the great agent in the work of redemption, and is the prominent personage in the New Testament. He is the immediate author and medium, as well as the object of special revelation; yet not without the manifestation and co-operation of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost. In Jesus Christ the divine and human natures are united. In his divine nature he was GOD, the second person in the adorable TRINITY, equal with the Father. In his human nature, he was the son of Mary by miraculous generation. He lived on earth in a state of humiliation, yielded a perfect obedience to the law of God, and suffered death on the cross as a propitiation for sin; he rose from the dead, ascended upon high, and is exalted to be head over all things to the church. He is called the Son of God in reference to his humanity.

XI. The Gospel inculcates the following doctrine, or important articles of truth, viz. there is one God in three Persons "the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST." This mysterious and sublime truth, against which Deists have objected and blasphemed, is above our comprehension, though in no sense repugnant to our reason. It is our duty to confess our ignorance, and humbly to adore God, whom we cannot comprehend. The doctrine of the Trinity implies more than merely three dispensations, or modes of manifestation of one person, which amounts to Unitarianism: and yet it does not establish the idea of three separate and distinct deities, which would be Tritheism. The scripture conveys the idea, that each person of the Trinity holds the whole and entire divine nature and perfections.

This doctrine rests on broader evidence than the simple testimony of scripture itself. It was held by the primitive church, and has been an article of the Christian faith in all subsequent times. By broader evidence I mean, that it has been approved and tested by the Spirit of God, in every age; by its influence on the prosperity of the church, and in the reformation of mankind: in short, by the promotion of holiness among men, than which I know of no greater evidence of the purity of gospel doctrine.

XII. Our first parents were created pure and holy, but they fell from that state, rebelled against God, and became sinful, miserable, and mortal. "And as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "The phrase *original sin*," says Calvin, "is not found in the scriptures, but was invented by Augustine." Human nature was corrupted in Adam, and all that we have derived from him, partakes of that corruption. The federal headship of Adam to his posterity, constitutes no relation between them that is inconsistent with that great law of nature, which is universally known, viz. that every creature propagated in a series of generations, shall partake of the nature of its progenitors. The guilt of Adam's sin is not imputed to his posterity, independently of their own moral conduct, as it would be evidently subversive of all the principles of justice, to condemn a man for a sin, in which he had no will, no consciousness, and which was committed before he existed.

The imputation of sin and of holiness are not parallel cases; it is in the nature of benignity and grace to confer favour beyond merit, but contrary to the nature of justice to inflict punishment beyond desert.

XIII. Human nature is depraved, but that depravity is of the moral kind and relates principally to the heart, in which there is no degree of holiness—no true love to God. Of course, moral depravity is properly said to be total. Yet man, in a fallen state, is no less a moral agent; his actions are no less free and accountable than in a holy state: holiness is as truly required of him. Nor is there any impediment to his performing his duty but what lies in a voluntary disinclination to do it. Wherefore, the word of God commands him to break off his sins by righteousness, and turn to the Lord.

XIV. Regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the operation of the Holy Spirit; and without this change of heart a man cannot be saved; for "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But as sin does not consist in ignorance, or error of the understanding, though it may occasion ignorance, by withdrawing the mind from spiritual things, so the new birth is not produced by an increase of

knowledge, but is the cause of such increase. Enmity to God constitutes the nature of sin; for "sin is a transgression of the law" of God, and love is the fulfilling of the law. Therefore, the great change of heart necessary to all sinners, is from *enmity to love.*

XV. The sinner is justified by faith in Christ. Justifying faith is the soul's belief in, and acceptance of, Christ as the Saviour. In the plan of the gospel, it appears that the pardon of sin is to be obtained by the propitiation, or atonement, made by Jesus Christ.

The Redeemer in his glory, fulness, and grace, is exhibited in the gospel: the Sun of Righteousness shines in the heavens: his powers, perfections, and disposition, are made known in a proclamation of grace, that whoever will receive him as a Saviour, shall be pardoned, justified, and saved. Under this light, the sinner wants nothing but a heart to love the Saviour, in order to say, with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God." Saving faith is a clear apprehension of Christ in his nature, character, and offices, accompanied with love to Christ. But love to Christ is not caused by faith, or by any intellectual apprehension of Christ. Nothing is holiness but love, and holiness goes into the first exercise of the renewed heart: in fact, a saving change of heart is a change from sin to holiness, from hatred to love.

That process of mind in any one, which first imbibes a notion that Christ died for him, and will save him, on account of which he begins to love Christ, I denominate the operation of selfishness, and is no evidence of saving grace. The love of Christ certainly merits, and will meet with, a return of love from every good or holy heart. But *that* love, and all such love, is merely gratitude, and goes not into the true nature of holiness. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? Do not even sinners love those that love them?" The love I may feel for any being who does, or will do, me good, on that account, is the love of my own interest; for had he done me none of that good, he would have received none of that love from me.

Holy love is a principle far above gratitude. The Christian

certainly feels as much gratitude, as much thankfulness, as any one; but he feels a love far above gratitude. Holy love can embrace enemies as well as friends, where surely there is no gratitude. Holy love is due to God from creatures to whom he never will do good; even from fallen angels, and from all the wicked. The true and grand reason and motive of supreme love to God, is the infinite loveliness and beauty of his nature and character, which, in various ways, he has manifested to his creatures.

There are two things in religion, which, variously modified, make up its several parts. I mean *knowledge* and *love.* I here say nothing of divine agency, which is certainly employed in this important matter. As far as mere intellect is concerned, a man may believe Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. Some "sin wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth"—"crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame." Christ said to the Jews, "Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father."

Faith is, by some writers, termed a spiritual exercise, and said to spring from spiritual life. The term spiritual is often used in these cases without either true or definite import; and is always so used, when used to signify something which can neither be described, nor conceived of. Nothing can be found in religion higher, purer, more sacred or divine, than holiness, of which the grand element is love to God. "For he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him;" and "we know" saith the apostle John, "that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Christ having made propitiation for sin, it is consistent with Divine justice to pardon and justify the sinner, who shall embrace him by faith. But faith here implies love and obedience. The transfer of the righteousness of Christ to the believer, if it conveys more than that the sinner derives the benefit of pardon and justification by means of Christ's work, is without foundation.

XVI. The atonement of Christ is a propitiation made "for the sins of the whole world," by his sufferings and death, on

account of which, pardon, justification, and eternal life, are freely offered to every sinner; and all those, who embrace Christ by faith, and yield obedience to his gospel, shall be saved.

XVII. Every sinner, left to pursue his native dispositions of heart, would reject salvation. The same voluntary enmity of heart to God and holiness, which constitutes the depravity of all mankind, would induce them to reject Christ. The human heart is as averse to the mercy as to the justice of God. The mercy of God is as holy as his justice, and the plan of salvation by Christ, will as truly illustrate the perfection and glory of Divine justice, as the everlasting punishment of the wicked. Knowing, therefore, that all men would reject salvation, God determined, or decreed, to save a part of the human race, by Jesus Christ, and they are called, in Scripture, "the elect of God;" and them, by the influence of his Spirit, he will regenerate, and sanctify, and gather into his heavenly kingdom.

God's decree of election was a sovereign act of his grace, and was not founded in his foreknowledge of their obedience. But, according to the common acceptation of language, we can scarcely use the phrase, "sovereign act," without danger of conveying a wrong idea; for, in its application to the actions of men, it conveys the idea of arbitrariness without reason. God is the only being qualified for absolue sovereignty. As he has infinite power to do whatever his infinite wisdom and goodness shall dictate, there is no possibility that his will can be unjust, arbitrary, rash, or capricious. It is proper for him to say, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Those acts of God, which are called sovereign acts, are such as infinite goodness approves, and are, no doubt, grounded on adequate reasons. But God has not made known the particular reasons why, in his election to eternal life, one man is taken and another left. The Arminian ought to be reminded that his controversy, in strictness, is not with the doctrine of election, as here stated, but with a point much nearer home, viz. with the idea that the salvation of the sinner turns not on his own free act, but on the efficacious grace of God, which saves him. For if his salvation is not of his own free act, but of the grace of

God, it would have been different from what it is, as I said above, had there been no previous decree, provided the same wisdom and goodness governed. Nothing takes place from the mere arbitrary consideration of its having been decreed.

The opposition of many to the doctrine of decrees, and of course to *election*, arises solely from a misunderstanding of them. They regarded it in the same light as though every event was taking place under the resistless influence and sway of a blind, omnipotent fate; that things are as they are for no reason but because immutably decreed. Never was an apprehension more false. They cannot bear the idea that every thing was appointed from all eternity; they seem to want to reserve the power of altering matters, from day to day, as new emergencies may arise, and the great Ruler may get better light, having profited by experience. "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself." When men decree beforehand, changes are frequently necessary; but when eternal wisdom appoints, the same reasons which induced the appointment, will certainly induce, and justify, its execution. If sinners are saved by an act of Divine grace, the previous determination to save them does not alter the case, and, as I said, the same wisdom and goodness governing, would do the same thing, had it not been before determined.

Be not deceived; be not alarmed, lest in this wide scene of events, numerous, fleeting, and successive, as the waves of the sea, the purposes of God should fail in their accomplishment, be unequal in their operation, or in their result should impair the rights of an individual. "The judge of all the earth will do right." With steady eye, and perfect clearness, he perceives all creatures; with almighty power he rules all worlds, and with a providence all-wise and benevolent, he brings order out of confusion, light out of darkness, and the day-spring out of the shadow of death.

The election of some to eternal life, is no bar in the way of those not elected. And a decree of reprobation can mean nothing more than a determination not to save; and as it is posterior to rejection of salvation, and grounded on it, it indicates the doctrines of a full atonement, free offers of mercy, and every

thing implied in a state of probation. For it must always be remembered that election is no more from eternity than every other part of the Divine plan, such as propitiation, offers of mercy, probation, and redemption.

XVIII. The elect of Christ shall persevere in holiness, or sanctification, and be gathered into the kingdom of glory. This, however, depends on the purpose and promise of God, and not on the strength and immutability of Christian virtue. Those who appear to begin a religious life, and, at length, fall from their professions and hopes, and die in a state of impenitence, were never born again. But every true Christian is born of the spirit, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; and though faith is the gift of God, yet every man should be encouraged in his endeavors after salvation. No man can have any evidence of his good state, but as he finds himself conformed in temper and conduct to the laws of Christ. Those who have no evidence of their own piety should abstain from every sinful act, and be in the way, and in the use of the means of grace.

The doctrine of perseverance, as here stated, naturally follows, and flows from the doctrine of regeneration and justification, as stated above. If men turn to God and holiness of their own free will, without the special agency of the Holy Spirit, if they are justified by their good works, then it would not be wonderful if they should fall from grace.

Every christian should labour to persevere in faith and good works, and every man should labour to be a Christian. "Strive to enter in at the straight gate." Strive to "make your calling and election sure." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." "Break off your sins by righteousness."

XIX. There will be a general resurrection of the dead. "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth." "Now," saith St. Paul, "hath Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." The first fruits are a specimen of the cross that is to follow. Christ's body rose from the dead. "A spirit," saith he to his disciples, "hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." His body was

visible, tangible, and real. He ate, and probably drank. If this is to be regarded as a specimen of the resurrection, the true and real bodies of mankind will rise; but changed, and made indestructible and immortal.

Some entomologists are of opinion, that the natural history of insects furnishes an argument in favour of the resurrection. The changes they undergo are very curious and surprising. The bright and splendid butterfly, which breaks forth from the carcass of a lifeless and corrupted, a shapeless and loathsome worm, is as far beyond all human comprehension as the resurrection of the dead; and as truly displays the wisdom and goodness of Divine providence, though on a smaller scale.

The resurrection of the body, though a doctrine of revelation, yet seems to correspond with the dignity of rational natures, and the high destinies of an immortal creature. Man appears to be ultimately designed for immortality, in his entire nature. Had he never fallen, he would never have tasted death. "But since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." It will be to the eternal honour of the Redeemer tnat he conquered death, and rescued the body from the grave. In that he made the resurrection complete, and raised the bodies of the whole race, whose nature he had assumed, he completed the perfection and glory of his triumph.

> "Break off your tears, ye saints, and tell
> How high your great Deliverer reigns;
> Sing how he spoil'd the hosts of hell,
> And led the monster death in chains."

From the consideration of the resurrection of all the bodies of our race, I would suggest whether an argument does not rise in favour of a full and complete propitiation, and an offer of mercy to all men. It may be alleged, that it will be no benefit to the wicked that their bodies are raised. And will existence itself be a benefit? Will all the privileges which they receive in this life, prove benefits ultimately? They surely might have been benefits, had they been properly improved, and, so, had the sinner properly improved his day of probation, the resurrection of his body might prove a benefit.

It has been a favourite point with some, that the church of Christ would rise from the dead before the Millennium. This idea seems not to be supported from the various representations of Scripture.

XX. The day of judgment will immediately follow the general resurrection, when angels, and men, and devils, will be assembled before the Lord Jehovah Jesus. He shall judge the world, pronounce sentence, and execute the same. In the account which the Lord Jesus himself gives of that day, in the 25th chapter of Matthew, the moral conduct of those judged and sentenced, is alone mentioned. "Come ye blessed of my Father," &c. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat," &c. Again, Revelation xx. 11 and 12. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the Books were opened; and another Book was opened which is the Book of life: And the dead were judged out of those things written in the Books, *according to their works.*" Again, in the following verse, "And they were judged, *every man according to his works.*"

When men are tried before God, on the last great day, the grand question will be, what they have done for the glory of God, and for the advancement of his kingdom. Surely those who do not believe in Christ, will never yield obedience to his laws, will never devote themselves to his service, will never glorify his name on earth—will not be Christians. It is freely admitted, that "faith is a saving grace," and that the first act of faith, is justifying; but why? It is because it is an insurance of a saving change of heart—of a new creature: it is an evidence that old things are passed away, and that all things are become new. It is, in one word, an acceptance of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, to whom the understanding assents, as the Son of God, and Saviour of sinners, and in whom, as such, the heart is delighted, and reposes confidence.

Divine purposes, of which neither men nor angels can conceive, may be answered by the general judgment; but we can easily

perceive valuable ends answered by a public trial, and sentence. The power, and majesty, and glory of God, will then appear to all creatures in the person of Christ. Sinners shall look on him whom they have pierced, and every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. The government of God will be justified in view of all intelligent creatures, and they shall acquiesce in the justice and goodness of the final sentence.

XXI. The general judgment will issue in an everlasting state of rewards and punishments. Sinful creatures will dwell in a region of sin and misery. Infinite wisdom and goodness will mete out the nature and degree of their sufferings. But from the word of God, as well as from the nature and tendencies of sin, we have reason to believe their sufferings will be great. O, sinner! learn the value of the present hour, to flee from the wrath to come. O, my soul! let it be thy chief concern to seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.

As the lost of our race will have their final residence with the apostate angels; so, the redeemed will dwell and associate for ever with the elect angels. And the express and abundant promises of a new heavens and new earth, I think, should be received in more than a figurative sense, and ought to be understood as literally true. "And he that sat on the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And I beheld a new heavens and a new earth; for the first heavens and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." It may not be impertinent to remark, that some have thought, that before the deluge there was no ocean on this globe; that the waters were in the centre, or below the surface, and the lands incrusted over them.* And certainly, the researches of Hutton, Werner, and other eminent geologists of the present day, do not diminish the probability of this supposition.

The glories of the new heavens and earth are sublimely described in the scriptures. There will be a peculiar honour and felicity in dwelling with angels; beings of nobler forms and more exalted faculties than men. All the powers of conversation, locomotion, perception, and enjoyment, will be from the

* Burnet's Theory, &c.

first much improved, and will continue to improve for ever. But a chief advantage of that blissful world will be its entire freedom from all sin, and all its consequences. To the most pleasing situation there will be added beauty of form and purity of heart; it will be a vast region of pure intelligence and unmingled friendship. One glance at that society, one thrill of those exalted joys, will for ever cancel all regret at the remembrance of the relations and loves of this mortal life.

But every other advantage will be far outweighed by the continual presence, the communion, the smiles, the love of the incarnate God. The amazing, ineffable glories of divinity, concentrated in, and beaming round his person; softened, familiarized, brought near to the converse of saints and angels by his lovely humanity. Around his throne the apostles, patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, saints, yea, all his church—all his angels will gather; each arrayed in the new born glories of immortality—in the bright and spotless, the unfading and illustrious, robes worn at the marriage of the Lamb. "The Lamb shall be in the midst of them—shall lead them by fountains of living waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

XXII. The church of God seems appointed to pass through five successive dispensations, and may be compared to a stream of water: Her fountain head was in Adam, from whom till Moses, she seems a devious and almost invisible stream, wandering through impervious forests and wilds. From Moses till Christ, her waters gathered strength, were broader, though often narrowed by droughts, and almost swallowed up in sandy deserts. From Christ till the Millennium she becomes a majestic torrent; "her waves roll in light," vessels ply on her broad expanse; though still she has her narrows, her rapids, and cataracts. From the Millennium till the judgment, she becomes a sea; for then the knowledge and glory of God "covers the earth, as the waters cover the sea." From the general judgment she looks forward on a broad and boundless duration of glory and happiness:

> "Now vast eternity fills all her sight,
> She floats on the broad deep with infinite delight;
> Her seas forever calm, her skies forever bright."

Such are my views of the doctrines of religion. The outline, I confess, is very general and rapid: but if I have not sacrificed clearness to brevity, unless the reader mistake the import I mean to give to the terms I use, he may judge for himself, whether they be Hopkinsian, Calvinistic, Arminian, or any thing else. Knowledge and information are common stock. When we read books, and discover men's opinions and principles, and are convinced of their correctness, or find they agree with our own, we throw them into our own funds, and at length, perhaps, forget from whom we derived them. Thus they become our own. But we are in continual danger of mistaking authority for evidence; and the opinions of men, for the word of God. If we escape this rock, there is another, still more threatening, ready to receive us; that is, the danger of reading books, (not excepting the Bible itself,) not to discover what is true, but to gain confirmation in our opinions. And it is the unhappiness of most people, that they carry this point so far as carefully to avoid all books, excepting such as they are previously assured will give them full support.

Alas! the blind infatuation of men! could an inhabitant of some distant world, who did not know the perverseness and depravity of our race, believe, that there was such a thing among men as adopting a religious sentiment because it was popular?—Not because it was true, but because certain great men held to it? Could a holy angel believe, that error was made a stepping stone to promotion and honour?—a staircase to popularity and distinction? Could he believe it possible that one man could hate and persecute another, because he thought differently from him; and perhaps knowing, at the same time, (a case which sometimes happens,) that the man he persecuted was right, and he was wrong? Alas! angels do know it—and if susceptible of grief, cannot but mourn over the folly and wretchedness of our race. Devils know it—and if they can at all rejoice, it must be to see themselves outdone in madness, inconsistency, and folly, by men for whom a Saviour is provided.

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